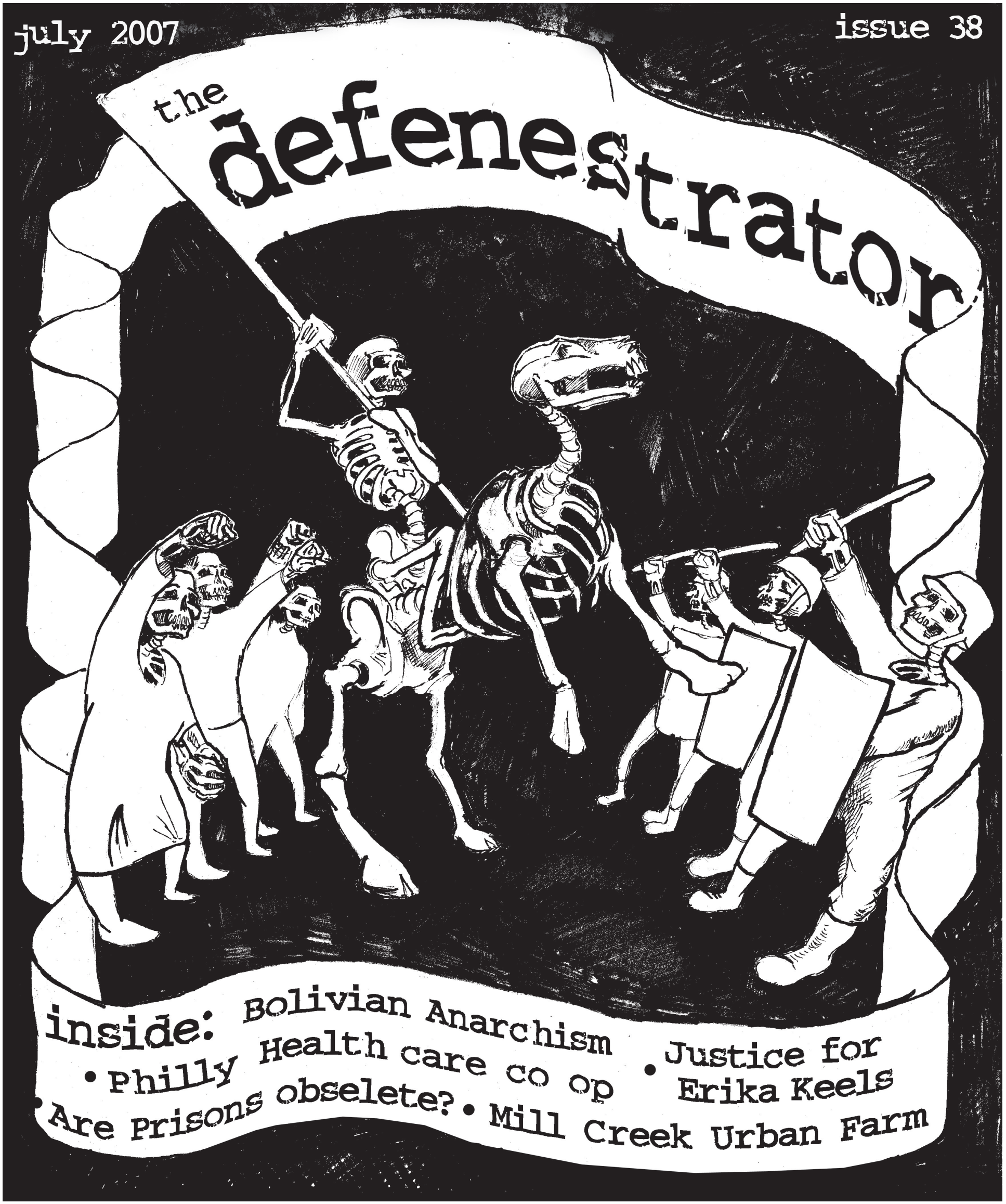
july 2007

issue 38

the defenestrator



inside: Bolivian Anarchism • Justice for Erika Keels • Philly Health care co op • Are Prisons obselete? • Mill Creek Urban Farm



The defenestrator is Philly's sporadic newspaper for resistance, creative revolution and action. To defenestrate Power means total refusal of its tools and tentacles. Like the Hussites who had their oppressors thrown down from the Prague castle into the angry mob below, the defenestrator wrestles power and privilege from its highest and most protected strongholds and casts the beast out of the window and down into the angry hands of the people.

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Justice for Erika

Friends Seek Justice for the Murder of a 20-Year Old Transwoman



Erika Keels, a 20-year-old black transwoman, was murdered on March 22, 2007, at the corner of Broad and Thompson in North Philadelphia, in a hit-and-run assault. Witnesses saw a man eject Ms. Keels from his car and intentionally run her over four times, killing her and leaving the scene. The medical examiner's report states that Erika was run over not just once but multiple times, supporting these eyewitness accounts. The driver, Roland Button, was later apprehended, but has yet to face any charges; indeed, he is still driving, his license has not been suspended, and his car has not even been taken for evidence. The Philadelphia police have refused to conduct an investigation of Erika's death and have closed the case.

Erika Keels was a vibrant, expressive, resilient young woman, and her friends were devastated and enraged by her murder. The failure of police to follow procedure when responding to Erika's death, even to carry out steps required for a hit-and-run accident, amplified the pain of her murder for those who loved Erika. Some of Erika's friends refused to accept this second affront, and questioned police officials about the classification of her death as an accident. Officials attempted to intimidate them by demanding their "birth" names, and told them they were "trying to make something out of nothing." Erika's friends began organizing to demand that her case be reopened and her death be investigated as a murder. The police seemed determined to keep Erika's murder as quiet as possible, and Erika's friends, as well as allies who soon joined them, were just as determined to bring to light the violence and injustice which brought an end to this remarkable person's life, and which the Philadelphia police were continuing to perpetrate.



The story of Erika's death is a shocking, upsetting one, and has touched many people who never knew Erika when she was alive. However, Erika's murder is by no means an anomaly. It is part of a devastating pattern of violence against trans people of color in Philadelphia and elsewhere. The murder rate of trans people in the United States is estimated at 7-10 times the national average. Trans people of color living and working in Philadelphia know they are at near-constant risk of physical attack, and many experience daily harassment and discrimination. Erika experienced a tremendous amount of violence, harassment and discrimination during her short lifetime. On and off the street from the age of 13, Erika was failed by the very systems that claim to offer support, opportunities and protection to youth like her, including the Philadelphia school system, the Department of Human Services, and, of course, the Philadelphia Police Department.



Violence against trans youth of color in Philadelphia takes many forms. The Transhealth Information Project (TIP) drop-in night, a spot Erika frequented, is held weekly at a building in the Gayborhood of Center City Philadelphia. The TIP drop-in is aimed at building community, fighting isolation, and providing education and services; for many months it was home to a thriving Vogue group, popular with trans and gender-variant youth of color in and out of the ball scene. Not two weeks after Erika's death, TIP was forced to shut down the Vogue group, due to police harassment and complaints from white neighbors about youth hanging out in front of the building. There has been a longtime presence of trans, gender non-conforming and queer youth of color on the streets of the Gayborhood, but a combination of gentrification and Philadelphia's push to corner the gay tourism market have led to youth of color being increasingly unwelcome in this predominantly white-owned, ritzy neighborhood. Displacement, police harassment, cultural eradication, and the elimination of what little community space is available to trans youth of color – these forms of violence are not as gruesome as the violent murder of a young woman. But individuals touched by Erika's death would be well advised to acquaint themselves as well with the structural, day-to-day violence faced by her and her community.

Join the Justice 4 Erika campaign in demanding that the Philadelphia Police Commissioner and the Accident Investigation Division to reopen Erika's case and conduct a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding her death. We stand together to demand police accountability, justice for trans and gender non-conforming people, and respect for the inherent dignity and worth of every person.

Steps to Take Action:

1. Sign our community support letter (http://www.petitiononline.com/ErikaK/petition.html).

2. Add Justice 4 Erika as a friend on Myspace (http://www.myspace.com/justice4erika).

3. Get organizations or groups you're in to sign on to the support letter. (Organizations should email Justice4Erika@gmail.com to confirm their support.)



Mexico, Barricades are Reconstructed in Oaxaca City as Hundreds of Thousands March

Date Sat, 16 Jun 2007

On the one year anniversary of the violent attempt by the Oaxaca state government to evict the section 22 teachers strike, hundreds of thousands of people marched in Oaxaca City and barricades were reconstructed throughout the city. At around five in the morning on Thursday, June 14th, 2007 hundreds of fireworks cracked the quiet dawn and burst in the sky above Oaxaca City, Mexico. Though the streets remained still, people began waking up and movement chants could be heard coming from the windows of houses. "If Ulises doesn't go there will be no peace!". This isn't like any other day in Oaxaca; thursday marked the one year anniversary of the violent attempted eviction by the state police of the Section 22 teachers sit in strike in the Zocalo. What happened that day set off a chain of events that led to a statewide uprising and a popular movement with millions of participants to remove the right-wing governor Ulises Ruiz from office and replace the entire state government with popular assemblies. An organization of thousands of civil groups was formed, called the Peoples' Popular Assembly of Oaxaca (APPO). Physically removing local governments from office, the APPO lived autonomously in the capitol city and other communities for nearly five months until the entrance of the Preventive Federal Police in the last days of October.

In the early afternoon of June 14th, 2007, a megamarch of over 300 thousand participants began to arrive in the Zocalo of Oaxaca City. The march began at the airport nearly 8 kilometers away, and as the beginning of the march entered the Zocalo people were still leaving from the airport. Contingents from Chiapas and Michoacan and other states in Mexico participated in the march as well.

At approximately 7pm barricades reappeared for the first time since November throughout the city. People spontaneously constructed barricades, and at least two major thoroughfares were blockaded using buses and cars. Crowds gathered to reinforce the barricades, and a festive mood took over Oaxaca City.

Though the movement to remove Ulises Ruiz from office and replace the existing government with popular assemblies was brutally repressed and many members of the movement were forced into hiding after the violent battle between protesters and police on November 25th, 2006, the struggle in Oaxaca is far from over. On May 1st and again on June 14th, 2007, hundreds of thousands of people marched in Oaxaca City in a strong show of force of the remaining presence of dissent among the Oaxacan people and their continuing demands for justice and autonomy.

Police Brutality Turning Deadly

Police say that intimidation leaves witnesses silent, but who do you call when the killers wear a badge?

by jason

Back in April of this year, police Capt. Benjamin Naish responded to the growing murder rate in Philadelphia that "It's the community's decision right now, they are the people that must stand up and get angry and say, 'Enough is enough.'" I couldn't agree more. We need to get angry and hold the police, the mayor, and the city accountable for the violence perpetrated against people of this city everyday.

Towards the end of this last popularity contest called a mayoral election, the problems of this city were boiled down to one word: crime. It was staggering to watch each candidate try to outdo the other with their promises of more cops on the streets and tougher penalties on criminals. Never once was the focus where it should have been, which is more cops will not solve the problem of abject poverty in this city. You want to lower the crime rate? Then start treating people like human beings instead of potential criminals. We need a city minimum wage of 10 dollars an hour, free healthcare for all, and a leash and muzzle placed on the economic criminals of this city: PGW, PECO, SEPTA, and Comcast. When you force people into desperate situations, how can you be surprised when people act out of desperation?

After the police murders of Sean Bell and Amadou Diallo in New York, what do we as citizens have to look forward to as far as being in the wrong place at the wrong time, held in the grip of fear that a police officer may at any given time murder us for any reason, or no reason? The police in this city were able to murder 11 people, including 5 children in 1985 during their assault on the MOVE house on Osage Avenue and burn an entire block to the ground without a single charge ever being filed against the police department or a single officer. In 2006, Philly police shot 69 people resulting in 22 police murders, including 2 outside of the city in what was the highest number of police killings of any major US city.

Speaking with Exec. Director William M. Johnson of the Police Advisory Commission yielded no actual numbers of police killings in Philadelphia so far this year. He stated that the numbers would usually be compiled at the end of the year. But rest assured the number will be deeply disturbing. From Kyle Byrd being beaten to within an inch of his life in North Philly, to 20 year old Bryan Jones who was brutally gunned down by Philly cops on New Years Day for the crime of reaching into his waistband (Jones was unarmed), we see a disgusting trend of assault, rape, theft, corruption, and ultimately murder. Reaching into the waistband seems to be a recurring theme in police killings and almost all who were murdered by police end up being unarmed. Is this not a flimsy excuse utilized by officers to justify their reckless, deadly judgment?

In each instance of police brutality and police murder, a "complete and thorough investigation" is always promised by police officials, yet these are not isolated incidents. Is it safe to assume that the entire nature of the police in this city and country is meant for one purpose? That purpose of course is protecting the wealthy while oppressing the poor through any means. I only wonder what will happen when the poor and marginalized citizens of this city start shooting back.

DON'T

LET DEVELOPERS LOOT & PILLAGE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!



A lot of developers have been around here and other neighborhoods taking houses for little or nothing in return. Take these steps to protect yourself and your family:

-If you are behind on your property taxes, make a payment arrangement with the city. Clear up any problems with your deed before it's a problem.

-Before you sell a family home to a developer, consider hiring a property manager and renting it out yourself.

-If you do decide to sell, find a trusted realtor and real estate lawyer to get the best price possible.

West Shore Civic Association

is a group run by and for your neighbors. We would like to meet with your block and talk about these issues further.

Come to a COMMUNITY MEETING

THUR JULY 26, 7PM USP Campus

For more info call 215-662-0826 or 267-679-9454



This is What Health Democracy Looks Like!

An interview with Paul Glover about building alternatives to corporate health care

by eian weissman

Paul Glover, the founder of the Ithica Health Alliance—a health coop located in Ithica, NY—has founded a similar venture in Philadelphia called "Philahealthia". According the Philahealthia website (http://www.healthdemocracy.org/philahealthia.html):

"PhilaHealthia and the Ithaca Health Alliance (see Ithaca member letters to NYS Insurance Dept) have been establishing co-op sector health coverage as an alternative to dependence on corporate insurance and declining federal/state coverage. We endorse universal health coverage but seek to promote, by our example, a genuine health care system exemplifying efficiency, generosity and humanity for this basic human need.

We call this the Health Democracy movement. Mutual Health Organizations (MHOs) are held to higher standards than HMOs.

Yet we are more than a health payment plan. Our members form a movement which addresses public health issues."

It is pretty clear what we are against: a bloated, unequal health-care system with a cash register for a heart and a head full of clock springs. "Care" isn't the usual commodity subject to supply and demand with caring, the more you give away the more you get. So how then is it that we have a health-care crisis? It is easy to recognize the crisis; it is easy to define what we are against. The hard part is deciding where to go next. In this interview, Paul Glover shares with the Defenestrator some ideas for constructive alternatives to our health care crisis.

defenestrator: In an interview with the Philadelphia Weekly, you stated that you were concerned that Philahealthia—which is already facing some troubles before its even gotten off the ground and lacks the 6 years of community support that the Ithaca network had before it faces such difficulties might not survive. How are prospects looking for Philahealthia?

Paul glover: We're progressing well. Our pledge campaign, to get 1,000 Pennsylvanians to agree to pay their $100/YEAR membership fee when 1,000 have pledged, revives when Michael Moore's "Sicko" premiers. We'll be handing out flyers at the shows. We're welcoming more people to join the board of directors. http://www.healthdemocracy.org/philahealthia.html

d: The article ends with you stating that "philahealthia" ought to be welcomed aboard as a pilot program rather than smashed with a sledgehammer. This line made me think of a strange analogy: of a meeting that Che Guevara had with representatives of the US government shortly after the Bay of Pigs invasion. He thanked them for the invasion, stating that it had been a catalyst for their revolution. Not a very perfect analogy I admit...

pg: If the Pennsylvania Insurance Department takes us to court for trying to help one another, we'll take them to the court of public opinion. I've written an article detailing the collusion between the state's insurance regulators, legislators and HMOs that keeps premiums high and competition low: "A Crime Not a Crisis" http://www.healthdemocracy.org/painsure.html

d: Do you see the insurance industry as trying to squash small startups like Philahealthia?

PG: Eighty years ago most health insurance was genuinely nonprofit, managed by fraternal organizations like the Moose, Elks, Odd Fellows. They build medical centers (like the Mummers), orphanages, old folks' homes, paid survivor benefits and buried the dead. People paid pennies per week. These plans worked so well that for-profit corporate investors decided to take over the territory, gradually legislating fraternal health plans out of existence. Now, to get into the insurance poker game in Pennsylvania you have to put $1,500,000 on the table, and cover many mandates. This shuts the door on grassroots mutual aid systems. We're kicking the door open again.

D: Do you think that discontentment with the current state of health care in Philly is enough to create lasting change?

PG: Most families, businesses and taxpayers are fed up with corporate greed in the health system. They have relied on legislators, state and federal, to solve the problem. Many of us can't wait for government to become honest or for HMOs to become generous. You could have a Million-Suffering March on Washington and there'd be some congressional hearings but nothing substantial would happen, I believe. That's why I think we need to take direct action. The only people who really care about us are us. Co-op health plans, moreover, contribute to the campaign for universal coverage, by organizing networks of the uninsured and underinsured to demand single payer. When you go to meetings advocating universal coverage, most people present are insured liberals. Were a national health plan enacted-- Medicaid for All-- we'd need a grassroots network to defend it against inevitable attacks, just like organic food standards have been defended by hundreds of thousands of activists.

D: Can you think of any strong catalysts that helped the Ithaca Health Network to acquire the momentum needed to overcome these kind of hurdles?

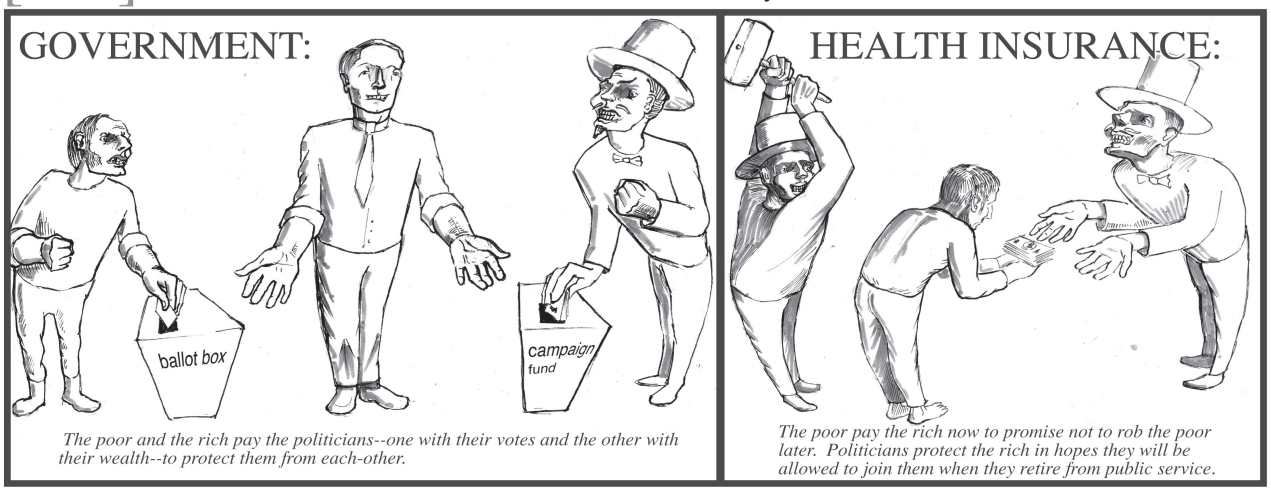
PG: We did not ask for permission to fund one anothers' health needs. We built a solid track record of honest and efficient service, six years, before the state discovered us. By that time we had lots of political backing. When NY's Insurance Department told us to cease and desist we said "no" and kept going. We invited them to adopt regulations for co-op health plans that we drafted http://www.healthdemocracy.org/legislation.html They did not do so, but finally agreed to keep their hands off, telling us to check in every six months.

D: It seems that the Pharmaceutical industry and Insurance companies are pretty entrenched in Philadelphia. Have you noticed much of a reaction by private,

continued next page

[UN]*NECESSARY EVILS*

by eian -- www.dhruva.vesana.com



The poor and the rich pay the politicians--one with their votes and the other with their wealth--to protect them from each-other.

The poor pay the rich now to promise not to rob the poor later. Politicians protect the rich in hopes they will be allowed to join them when they retire from public service.

Philadelphia Community Acupuncture



In the magical space on the third floor of the Firehouse, hundreds of bike frames used to recline in the dark on their way to recovering as fully functioning and beautiful bicycles. Starting in August, hundreds of people will be reclining every week while receiving affordable and relaxing natural health care under the same cathedral ceiling.

Philadelphia Community Acupuncture (PCA) is part of a national movement called community supported acupuncture, also known as CSA (agriculture reference intended), which has established a standard of providing natural medicine that empowers patients, builds community and fights classism.

Like many things with significant social change potential in the U.S., acupuncture had run into hyper-capitalism and lost its way. As practitioners, we're trained by our visionary teachers to see and treat patterns of disharmony in individuals. But, we're trained by our "practice management" instructors to completely ignore the patterns of disharmony in society and "charge what your worth".

In the Taoist yin-yang theory on which Chinese Medicine is based, the interior body is seen as a microcosm or reflection of the universe around us, including the state of our relationships and our environment. Justice is Health. We all know this at all kinds of levels. But, the acupuncture industry has, in fact, adopted the chiropractic business model and situated itself primarily within the spa, turning an incredibly simple and cheap and powerfully effective natural medicine into an almost superfluous (therefore "alternative") boutique therapy available only to the very wealthy.
For those with fewer resources, government subsidized charity has proven to be important work, but has led to burnout among practitioners. The charity aspect of the work also tends perpetuate classism in many ways.

That leaves the rest of us, the poor and working and middle class who neither want charity nor have out-of-pocket cash to burn for healthcare. If you're in this majority, chances are you've either never had acupuncture, or you've had the one or two treatments you could afford. Most conditions, however, respond most favorably to a course of acupuncture treatments which helps retrain the body over time and re-balance its qi and blood.

To make acupuncture affordable while supporting oneself as a healer the idea is streamline treatments and see multiple patients in an hour. So Lisa Rohleder, one of the movement's founders, returned to the traditional approach; instead of asking each patient lots of questions, she taught herself how to rely on pulse diagnosis to decide on the treatment. This is exactly how acupuncture is practiced traditionally in Asia -- many patients per hour and very little talking.

Working Class Acupuncture was born in Portland, Oregon. WCA sees about 450 patients a week now. Each patient chooses a treatment cost on a sliding scale of between 15 and 35 dollars. If a patient needs be treated twice a week for 6 months for some very serious condition, for example, a fee will be negotiated that the patient can afford. The emphasis is on making it possible for everyone to get the number of treatments he or she needs.

Ellen Vincent and I are starting Philadelphia Community Acupuncture inspired directly by Working Class Acupuncture. We will use the same fee structure, and like WCA, we'll be abandoning the boutique acupuncture norm of treating patients on tables in individual cubicles. This is not traditional in Asia, where acupuncture usually occurs in a community setting. We'll use recliners, clustered in groups in a large, quiet, soothing space. Treating patients in a community setting has many benefits: it's easy for friends and family members to come in for treatment together; many patients find it comforting; and a collective energetic field becomes established which actually makes individual treatments more powerful refreshed.

Neither PCA nor WCA had any start-up capital. So, in both cases, we asked for help. And, help we got. Patients and friends donated (or exchanged for acupuncture) their furniture, art, plants, account-

continued on page 14

Death & Texas: The Kenneth Foster Case

by Mumia Abu-Jamal

For a decade, Kenneth Foster, Jr. has languished on one of the worst Death Rows in the U.S. - Texas.

He now faces an execution date (of August 30, 2007) despite the fact that even the trial judge, the DA, and the jury that sentenced him to die admit he never killed anyone.

Whoa! I know that it sounds funny (or fishy), but it's not. It's just a fluke of Texas law. In Texas, that fluke is called the Law of Parties - a variant on conspiracy law. But, like most things Texas. This law takes a bigger chunk out of the accused.

In essence, the Law of Parties criminalizes presence, not actions.

Under U.S. Law, as announced by the Supreme Court in its 1982 Edmunds v Florida decision, a death-sentence for one who killed no one, nor intended to, nor assisted in such a killing was a violation of the 8th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution.

But again - this is Texas.

This is the same state that ruled in the Herrera case that innocence is irrelevant; that poisoned the Black activist Shaka Sankofa (born Gary Graham); that twice violated court orders from the US Supreme Court in the Miller-El cases; and that sent George W. (as in Warmonger) Bush to the White House.

These items are noted, of course, to make clear the very real danger that Kenneth Foster, Jr. faces.

A young Black man - an innocent man - on Death Row - in Texas!

Kenneth (also known by his adopted name, Haramia KiNassor) is a talented writer, poet, and father of an adorable 10 year old girl named Nydesha.

Help free her dad.

With August 30 Execution Date, the Wife of Kenneth Foster Jr Speaks Out

Hans Bennett interviews Dutch hip hop artist Jav'lin

Hans Bennett: What is Kenneth like?

Jav'lin: We've been together for two years. He is very loving, caring, passionate, and charming. He can light up the room when he starts smiling. When I first met him, this surprised me because so many death row prisoners have spiritually died. But Kenneth was still growing and shining after so many years on death row.

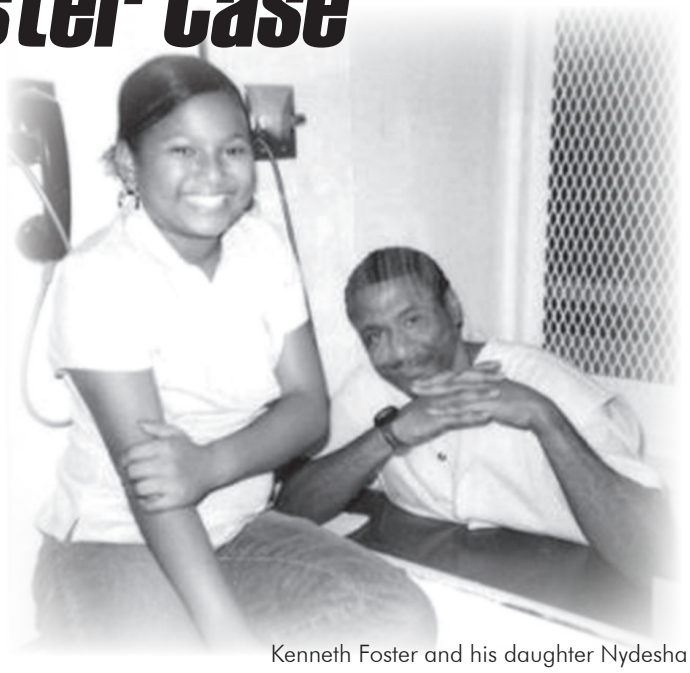
We both want to change the world by bringing stories of what we've seen and been through back to the people. He is so conscious and that's beautiful because when you're on death row, you don't have to be conscious. He's chosen to use the time wisely and really search for self.

H: How can folks help Kenneth?

J: We are making as much noise as possible, without being too outrageous, because we don't want to offend people with it. We are focusing on the "Law of Parties". We feel it should not have been used in Kenneth's case because there was no conspiracy, and that alone speaks for itself.

We are collecting letters to the Governor and the Board of Pardons and Paroles, so we can let them know that people are concerned with Kenneth's case. The Coalition to End the Death Penalty (CEDP) is organizing rallies and education events.

We don't want letters like "this guy is innocent, ya'll are on some bullshit." We do want people to be honest, because that is our strength. Kenneth wasn't always an angel, and he did get into some bad stuff. But, he's not a killer, didn't mean for anybody to be killed, and he feels bad about that. By law, Kenneth should have some form of punishment, but he should never have been sent to death row for it. We want people to focus on that in the letters.



Kenneth Foster and his daughter Nydesha

Folks can email letters to Kenneth.Foster.Jr@hotmail.com and Kenneth's attorney will hand-deliver them to the governor.

H: Anything else?

J: Most people on death row will say that they're innocent, so I know people are very skeptical about issues like this. But, it has been proven before that innocent people have been executed. I would suggest that everybody thinks about the death penalty and that when someone is executed, the punishment is done. He then doesn't have to live with what he did every day. Life in jail is so much harder in many ways.

Also, with life imprisonment, things can still be rectified. The authorities can admit to their mistakes, instead of executing someone who is later found to be innocent.

***

If you wish to read more about his amazing case on the web, go to: www.freekenneth.com or write:

Kenneth Foster Support Group
P.O. Box 14268
San Antonio, TX 78214

Paul Glover cont...

for profit healthcare providers in response to your organizing efforts in Philadelphia?

PG: Tens of thousands of jobs in Philadelphia depend on health insurance and pills. The Pennsylvania single-payer law proposed (SB300) would retrain and rehire these folks in new industries. Imagine the discretionary income ready to spend in new markets, were people freed from the costs of health insurance. New businesses, new travel, household energy efficiency, weekly massages, and so on. As PhilaHealthia gets louder and stronger we expect HMOs and government will get fiercer, but that will play into our hands.

D: It seems that Philahealthia is an pretty direct offshoot of the Ithaca Health network. Was it your intention to recreate a similar model in Philadelphia? Have differences between Philadelphia and Ithaca caused much difficulty in trying to organize Philahealthia?

PG: Organizing the Ithaca Health Alliance was easier insofar that, since I had started the Ithaca HOURS local currency, people trusted that my scheme would work. They handed me $100 bills. Here in Philadelphia few people knew me, so we have relied instead on a pledge campaign requiring a minimum 1,000 members. We're also seeking a board of directors with lots of trusted Philadelphians. But with 135,000 uninsured in Philadelphia, and nearly one million statewide, we can readily become the best deal in the state for people unable to wait for universal coverage and unable to afford private coverage.

D: There is apparently a bill in the works in Philly, Senate Bill 300, seeking to provide Single Payer, universal health care much like a bill that did pass in California recently but was eventually shot down by the Governator there. Rendell has stated his opposition, and seems to be too beholden to Pharmaceutical and Insurance companies to be counted on to vote for this bill. Do you have any thoughts about the prospects for a single payer Health care system in Philadelphia?

PG: Money runs government. Every politician is surrounded by capitalists threatening to punish their disobedience, and ready to reward their obedience. There will be a heroic push to enact SB300, and people should join that effort, but I believe HMO money will trump.

D: It seems that the Philahealthia model is a very different, grass roots model of health-care as opposed to the single payer, universal health care model proposed by some as a workable solution to the health care crisis in this country. There was a quote in a book I was reading recently by Ivan Illich. He describes how words such as care—formerly verbs or actions that we committed—are increasingly being used as nouns—commodities that we can purchase. He gives the example of "health care", which is increasingly a product that we purchase rather than something that we as healers can practice. I read that Philahealthia plans to create a clinic as well as providing grants for health care. In addition to providing affordable health care, does Philahealthia aim to empower independent, grassroots medical practice? In your experience did the Ithaca Health Network do much to empower its constituents to provide "care" as well as making the services more affordable to them?

PG: The aim of co-op health care is to transfer ownership of healing facilities to members. We don't want to just pay more money for more care, we want to control the infrastructure. Governments can be generous or stingy, national plans may come and go, but owning one's own health system makes attention to needs more certain and more dignified. In Ithaca, members own their own free clinic and they volunteer there: http://www.ithacahealth.org/clinic.htm http://www.ithaca.edu/ithacan/articles/0603/23/news/0free_heal.htm

D: I remember a line from that movie The Take which has always stuck with me. In the opening scene, Naomi Klein recounts the days after the "battle for seattle" when the anti-globalization camp got some media exposure. Their hosts posed a question to them, "you have shown us what you are against; now what are you for?" At the risk of sounding a bit redundant, what are you for in regards to healthcare reform? What do you envision, on a broader scale, as a workable option for Health-Care in Philly?

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Against and Beyond the State

John Holloway and Marina Sitrin talk prefigurative politics in Latin America

Tuesday, 29 May 2007

John Holloway and Marina Sitrin discussed the new social movements in Latin America, power, the state, and prefigurative politics, in February of 2007. This is a continuation of a discussion that began in 2004, also on the topics of power, prefigurative politics and Latin America.

Marina Sitrin: Our last interview/conversation was in 2004. In that we focused on the question of state power, and on not taking it in particular. We grounded most of the conversation in the autonomous social creations that have been and are taking place in Latin America. Many people argue that much has changed in Latin America . I am thinking in particular about the 7 "left" governments now in formal positions of power, from Bolivia and Venezuela to Ecuador and Nicaragua, and people who say that "now" the left has arrived. Has there really been the shift that people are talking about? Is the important shift in formal power, as most commentators address? Should this even be the starting point of our conversation?

John Holloway: Yes, I think it is a good place to start. These are not miserable times. Perhaps that is the most important point. Friends write to me from Europe sometimes and it is clear that they are thinking in terms of Johannes Agnoli's argument that it is important to keep subversive thought alive especially in miserable times such as the present. But, living in Latin America, it is very clear that these are not miserable times. They may be awful times, frightening times, but they are not miserable: they are exciting times, full of struggle and full of hope. The importance of the rise of the "left" governments is that they are a reflection of the strength of struggle in the continent as a whole.

I say "reflection", but they are also a response to the rise of social struggles, a very complex and contradictory response. In all cases, they represent the attempt to satisfy the struggle, to give it a state form, which means of course to defuse the struggle and channel it into forms of organization compatible with the reproduction of capital. In some cases the "left" governments are openly reformist and repressive (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay), in other cases (Venezuela, in particular), there seems to be a genuine attempt to push the state form to the limit, to open it out into real forms of popular control. I doubt how far that can be done from within state structures and from within a leader-dominated organization I doubt very much, but certainly the trajectory of the Venezuelan government has been more interesting than expected.

So the real importance of the "left" governments is NOT the facade but that behind the facade the continent is fizzing.

MS: It's the fizzing of the continent, and where the fizzing is located, that I want to talk more about. In particular I am thinking about the more autonomous movements, from the Zapatistas and APPO (Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca) in Mexico, to the Coordinadora del Agua y por la Vida in Bolivia, to the autonomous unemployed workers movements in Argentina, and the hundreds of now recuperated and occupied workplaces, not only in Argentina, but also Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile etc. What effect do you think the new "left" governments have on these more autonomous movements? Do they open up more space for the movements?

JH: No, I don't think they open up spaces for the movements. Or possibly they open up spaces for what the movements want to do, but push them into a different way of doing it, into a way of doing things that blends into the system. In the best of cases, there is an expropriation of a revolution: the government carries out many of the aims of the movement, but it does it /on behalf of/ the movement, telling the movement in effect to stay at home or convert itself into the loyal supporter of the government. This is very much the feeling I got in Bolivia, for example. Certainly the Evo Morales government means a significant break with previous governments, and it is implementing the demands of the movement that brought down the previous presidents, but it is doing so in a diluted form. And the social movements are given the option of either declaring unconditional loyalty or being marginalized. So there is a real expropriation and dilution of the revolutionary movement. I think this is probably true of any really left government, understanding by "really left" a government that actually grows out of the movement itself. In other cases, of course, like Argentina, the government does not grow out of the movement, but simply offers a more liberal response than previous governments.

Is it better, then, to have a left or a right-wing government, or does it not make any difference? I think that, on the whole, it is probably better to have a left government, though not always. In the case of Mexico, I think that López Obrador would probably have been less repressive and destructive than the Calderón government is proving to be. But there would certainly have been a process of expropriation of the movement. The important thing is to maintain our own logic and forms of organization, whatever the color of the government.

MS: How does one fight against government intervention and expropriation? One of the challenges that I see is that the state is determining the framework of the conversation. In Bolivia the state is proposing certain things that would potentially be good for the population and the population is invited to participate in this. Do you participate? And even if you participate in the most horizontal way the discussion is one framed by the state. How can this really be horizontal if the agenda is predetermined? So, for example, you are part of an autonomous community outside Cochabamba in Bolivia, of which there are now many. These communities may be discussing network-like relations to one another and alternative forms of exchange. Now the government of Evo proposes nationalization of resources in that community. How does an autonomous community not have their path subsumed by what seems like the good intentions of the state? Can there be a relationship to the state that still allows autonomy? And, last, if the decision is to continue to organize autonomously, and not allow the state's agenda to become that of the movement or community, how does a community explain to other parts of society, who see the intentions of the state as good, why they are ignoring the state's agenda?

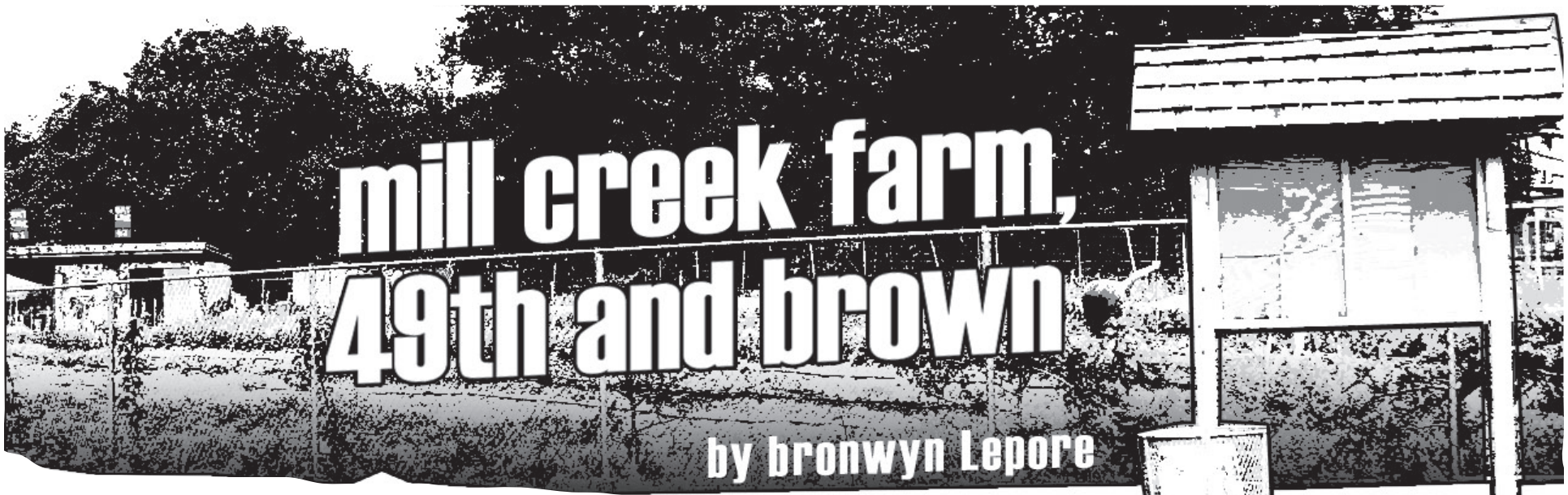
JH: In this interview you are setting the agenda with your questions. If I didn't like the questions I wouldn't just ignore the question, I would reply in a way that sought to re-impose my agenda. A conversation is always two-sided. If you tell me that you're going to nationalize gas on our behalf, then I say "Excellent, but if it's on our behalf, then let us administer it." The issue is one of form, isn't it, rather than content, the *how* rather than the *what* of politics. That is surely what we have to push all the time. The central problem with Evo and with Chávez is not so much what they're doing as the way that they are doing it, the organizational forms involved.

In other words, our relation with the state is not just against, and not just beyond, but against-and-beyond. The only autonomy we can have is an autonomy that moves against-

continued next page



illustration by Michael Schwartz



mill creek farm, 49th and brown

by bronwyn Lepore

"Down-to-earth reforms or feasible social changes coexist with utopianism and are often fed by it." Russell Jacoby, Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age

From the order of nature we return to the order—and the disorder of humanity.

From the larger circle we must go back to the smaller, the smaller within the larger, the smaller within the larger and dependent on it. From "Healing," by Wendell Berry

Jade Walker and Johanna Rosen, had been looking for a place in Philly to create an ecologically sustainable, popular education model of a working city farm. When a spot came up, next to a long-standing (15 years) community garden at 49th and Brown in West Philly, they put in a proposal for the Philadelphia Water Department owned site and, promising to develop a storm-water management system and to keep the space "green" and community-centered, won a 99-year free lease for the plot, as well as a chunk of money to grade the land and compost it (with mushroom-compost from local Kennet Square). Additional moneys, to put in a fence, buy a compost toilet, and build a shed, came from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and the Horticultural Society (who continues to offer support). According to Jade, the soil was already good quality; former row-homes are long gone, after being compromised by Mill Creek and the surrounding area has a history of community garden culture offering inspiration, support, wisdom and advice.

They spent the winter of 2006 writing and applying for grants to get things going and pay themselves and inherited non-profit status from former University City High School students, who had received grants/funding to start a bread truck, modeled on the People's Grocery in Oakland, California, to sell healthy, less expensive, bulk goods in the neighborhood.

In the spring, with the help of about 70 others, local and visiting, they focused on building and plumbing, putting up cob (a mixture of clay, sand and straw – all found on site) walls for a wash station and tool shed, installing the compost toilet (human feces are mixed with sawdust and other natural waste materials for later gardening use) and creating a "living roof" of alpine seedums (the types of plants that often grow on rocks and mountains and don't need much soil depth) planted over a waterproofing membrane. Living roofs provide warmth in winter, absorb moisture, prevent run-off and create coolness in the summer. A big goal is to use closed systems where any generated "waste" is re-used.



Hillary Glass, of NYC's Beehive Collective, came down to help out with a mural and beautiful hand-painted signs for market days and other farm happenings/announcements.

SEPTA donated a truck, inspiring the development of a grease/bio-diesel collective, who built a storage shed and now collect and make the alternative fuels for the truck, which they plan to share with the community for different needs and services, food distro, compost sharing/collecting, etc.

The first garden plantings were blueberries and garlic and have expanded to fruit trees and berry bushes, annuals and perennials (interim planting is done throughout the farm's season), a variety of lettuces, kale, chard, okra, beets, asparagus, potatoes, carrots, you name it. In process are a medicinal herb garden (again, suggestions from neighborhood gardeners have really helped), a bee apiary, and installation of solar panels. Jade emphasized that rather than using the "organic" label, which is often a misnomer and can imply elitist and pricey, they are chemical free – no pesticides (instead bat houses were installed on the roof, and though Jade isn't sure if they're currently inhabited she said they haven't had many issues with bugs or rodents).

Over 1, 000 people visited the farm last year and there's been lots of interest. Other than working and sharing with others in the community, the educational projects, some temporary, some on-going, are what most inspire Jade and Johanna. They started a season partnership with City Harvest and the Prison Greenhouse Project which grows and distributes its bounty to local communities. There is a Wednesday evening and Saturday morning on-site market, as well as a market at 52nd and Haverford. They can now accept WIC, food stamps and senior vouchers. A partnership with the Mariposa food co-op on 47th and Baltimore allows members to work off time at the farm and provides fresh produce. Farm produce is also sold through the Fair Food stand at the Reading Terminal Market and sometimes to local restaurants like the White Dog Café. A couple of college students volunteering at the farm the day I visited had gotten paid internships (through their colleges) for their participation. Camden, New Jersey and Philly grade, middle and high school students have taken part in work-days and farm training; they offer programming – work projects, tours, lesson plans, seeds, all at sliding scale - for kindergarten through senior citizen. Six nearby schools, including the Wissahikon Charter School, come regularly. They are also working with others to form an urban farmer's network and the night of my visit, they were hosting their first Tuesday night farmer's "happy hour," to socialize and share tips and stories.

Though young, Jade, who grew up in Vermont, says she has been a farmer "forever." Influences include other farmers and gardeners, as well as journalist/novelist/poet/farmer Wendell Berry, whose The Hidden Wound: A History of Agriculture, Slavery and Racism in the U.S. was a particularly powerful read. She's also traveled extensively in Central America, which greatly influenced her understanding of urban agriculture, and Johanna has studied urban agriculture in Cuba.

City life can be stressful and hard. Philly has had a lot of bad press in the past few years, over the violence, on-going issues with the public school system, SEPTA, corruption, etc. etc., so it was great to see such glowing faces – everyone seems really psyched, as they should be; the love, time and effort of this project are everywhere obvious .

Mill Creek Farm is planning a big fundraiser for September 15, with beer from Yard's brewery, music, and, of course, yummy stuff from the farm, so SAVE THE DATE!!!

Against and Beyond continued

and-beyond, with as much emphasis on the beyond as possible – getting on with our own project, but understanding that project as a movement against-and-beyond. There is no pure exodus, only contradictory movements of rupture.

MS: Where do you see these ruptures? These ruptures that are also creations? The against and beyond?

JH: All over the place. It's a question of opening our eyes and seeing the world not in terms of domination but in terms of insubordination. The against-and-beyond I see as refusal-and-creation: "No, we are not going to do what capital requires of us; we are going to do what we consider necessary or desirable." This is what the Zapatistas are saying: "¡Ya basta! Enough of being oppressed, we are going to get on with our own project, create our own *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, our own system of health and education. And we are going to radiate and resonate outwards, we are not just going to be a closed autonomy, but a crack in the system of domination, a crack that spreads." Sometimes it is because the state just isn't there that people have no alternative but to take matters into their own hands. That has been the case in El Alto in Bolivia, where the profound tradition of self-government was a major source of the strength of the movement of rebellion in recent years – again not just autonomy but a crack in domination. Sometimes it is on a much smaller scale, a group of people getting together and deciding that they are going to dedicate their lives to what they consider important, whether it be cultivating the land or creating an alternative café. Here in Puebla, we have a wonderful Zapatista café, Espiral 7, which has become a focal point of the whole movement against-and-beyond. But often it is on a much more silent level, individuals or groups of friends deciding that they are not going to shape their lives according to the demands of money.

Perhaps it is all about setting our own agenda. The core of capitalism is that it is a system of command over what we do. To rebel is to say "no, *we* shall determine what we shall do, /we/ shall set our own agenda." In other words, within the against-and-beyond, we want the beyond to set as much as possible the direction and pace for the against. Obviously this can be very difficult in practice, but the great problem of the left is that we let capital determine the agenda most of the time, and then we follow behind, protesting. In the Otra Campaña, for example, the repression in Atenco meant that the government effectively

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Returning from the first US Social Forum:

Two ships passing on our winding way to a new dawn



by Suzy Subways

Wednesday, July 4, 2007

[Note: I am a queer, white, HIV-negative person who uses female pronouns and has non-transgender privilege. These ideas are the result of conversations with many people, but I wrote this as an independent AIDS community journalist and a leftist, and I don't speak for any group. Many thanks to my mentors who gave me feedback yesterday! It has changed a lot.]

The US Social Forum blew my mind, it grew my mind like a wild weed, it heard my voice and it rendered me inaudible—I talked and cheered and chanted so much that I couldn't speak above a whisper from Saturday morning until today. It gave me a feeling like, the Left is finally getting its shit together. I got a sense that people of color—especially immigrants, indigenous people, women of color and queer people of color—were like, "the Left is ours," and were bringing the most innovative strategies and concepts to be seen in years, rocketing the whole thing into another dimension.

The speech by Andrea Smith of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence at the plenary on Liberating Gender and Sexuality: Integrating Gender and Sexual Justice Across Our Movements—and the audience of hundreds' overwhelming response to it—was one of the most inspiring moments of my life. Not only did Smith question the domestic violence movement's reliance on the state to protect us, her organization's work offers all our movements the building blocks of an alternative.

I've been an activist for 17 years (mostly on access to higher education and queer and AIDS issues), and I feel like this is what many of us have been hoping for, yet not daring to imagine. Could the Left really be shedding its massive layers of racism, sexism, and homophobia? But the most inspiring moments always leave room for us to grow. This is a moment of great possibility for the AIDS movement and the Left. I won't make a list of reasons why the AIDS movement had moments of feeling marginalized at the USSF, but to illustrate this, I will say that HIV/AIDS was not mentioned once at the plenary on gender and sexuality.

AIDS activists die in at the US Social Forum in June

For those of us in the AIDS movement, this kind of silence tugs at old wounds, because Reagan did not say "AIDS" out loud until 1987, by which time an average of nine Americans had died of AIDS for every day that he had been in office. Now, we have lifesaving medicines in the US and other rich countries, but about 8,500 people around the world die of AIDS every day, and according to the NAACP, every day 72 African Americans contract HIV.

My goal with this letter is to point toward the light the Left offers the AIDS movement now, and ways the Left can learn from the AIDS movement now. The Social Forum illuminates both, because without women of color at the center, neither will ever find its way—and without the innovative new strategies emerging now, we would all just be talking.

Life after nonprofits

INCITE's second book, The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex, sold out all copies at the Forum, and its panel by the same name filled up so quickly that organizers had to post a sign on the door saying, "Please do not open – Fire Hazard!"—and still people squeezed in. Southerners on New Ground (SONG, a multiracial LGBT/queer group) held a workshop where participants also discussed the limits of the 501c3 model (for example, competition for funding between community groups; letting funders set your agenda; allowing college graduates to serve as front lines in communities they know nothing about or are themselves gentrifying; big nonprofits setting movement goals; grassroots groups not being taken seriously; self-perpetuation being valued over service and honesty, etc.) and exciting new ways to do what SONG called "free organizing." There were also "hybrid models," with some aspects of both the 501c3 and the free, such as a working board of directors with no staff, or having members vote on organizational decisions and pay dues. (For questions to ask yourself and help stimulate more ideas, see http://www.southernersonnewground.org/?p=53)

One attendee talked about her childcare collective, which charges only $75 every five months (for groceries). An activist from Louisville said that her community trusts her group more now that they're not backed by a white funder from outside the community. An activist from LA told how the Garment Worker Center is moving from a paid-staff model to all volunteers, with mentoring from Brooklyn's Sista II Sista.

In the AIDS movement, we know how the move from street action to institution-building meant that we had built the capacity to provide lifesaving services to our communities. Plus, AIDS organizations are the biggest employer of LGBT people in the US—and in some places, a provider of jobs to many people in our community who have a hard time finding work in a discriminatory environment due to their experience with prison, homelessness, drug use, or sex work, or because they're trans or gender non-conforming or living with HIV.

But our institutions are now turning on their creators—people living with HIV—and turning them into passive "consumers" of services, as if your local AIDS service organization were the local mall and HIV is no longer political. And "AIDS, Inc." took us off the streets, cooled off our activism. Who among us hasn't feared losing our jobs if we speak at that demo, or been told protests are a relic from the past? At the Campaign to End AIDS, a major national mobilization in 2005, Sean Strub, the PWA founder of POZ magazine, listed the major AIDS advocacy organizations that had failed to endorse or support the campaign, and railed against the lack of HIV positive inclusion on nonprofit boards.

SONG members pointed out that whether or not we choose to find new ways of serving and organizing our communities, we'll be forced to anyway, because our community-based nonprofits are dying. This especially speaks to the AIDS movement. Small HIV prevention and support organizations that Black, Latino, gay and other communities started 20 years ago are closing their doors all over the country because the federal money is being cut back to just cover medical care and HIV testing, not vital programs like condom distribution, street outreach, counseling, buddy programs, language interpretation, and housing. (For more info see http://www.poz.com/articles/401_11463.shtml)

The most inspiring and transformative HIV/AIDS program I've ever witnessed, Philadelphia's TEACH Outside, has been on the chopping block several times this year. Run by John Bell, who was a leader in ACT UP for years and is an HIV positive, African American Vietnam vet in recovery who spent years in prison, TEACH Outside is a class for people living with HIV who are newly released from incarceration. John Bell teaches how to live healthy with HIV and strategies for dealing with life on the outside, mentors students in activism, and tells them to call him anytime—but the biggest challenge for students is dealing with the double stigma of prison and HIV. I asked him once if the program is more than just a class, and he said, "It has to be. Because people aren't just unfeeling beings. Even though people have been incarcerated they're still human beings. To allow that person to become a working member of society, we're going to have to actually address the totality of their being. The emotional side, the spiritual side, the intellectual side."

Philadelphia's Project TEACH classes keep facing the axe because they are "psychosocial programs," not medical programs. So what are we going to do about the totality of the human being when the government will no longer fund it? Let's figure it out. The AIDS community should aim to be among those at the forefront of this effort, because our communities may have the most to lose, with lives depending on our services.

Protecting each other

We can also learn new ways to protect our communities from violence. At another Social Forum panel, the Young Women's Empowerment Project (a youth leadership organization grounded in harm reduction and social justice organizing by and for girls and young women ages 12-23 impacted by the sex trade and street economies) from Chicago talked about defending each other from street violence without relying on the police, who offer their own forms of violence. Some of the ways they suggest creating conditions in which violence against women is unacceptable include solidarity among women (sisterhood in the hood), safe housing, allies who can deal with pimps, and self-defense training. However we do it, finding new ways to protect each other from violence is an urgent need for the AIDS community, because the police do not protect people who are most at risk for HIV, like trans and gender non-conforming people, sex workers, and drug users. And the link between HIV and violence—which messes with people's ability to protect themselves from HIV—means that protecting our communities from violence is HIV prevention work.

Taking inspiration from each other's movements

In the HIV/AIDS movement, we need to make sure that women of color and queer people of color are at the center, and also that HIV positive people are at the center. We need to take inspiration from this moment in the Left and be reminded that we can't afford to compromise on taking the time to build new leadership among people directly affected by the issues, even when our time is urgently demanded to push for policy that can save millions of lives around the world. A strong movement is a social force that shifts policy in its wake or renders government decisions irrelevant by taking care of its own community's needs.

We also need for the Left to understand that our leaders are still dying. And it's mostly the people of color in our movement who are dying, for many reasons related to intersecting forms of oppression, but also because people with both HIV and hepatitis C have even more complex health challenges and treatment options than those with HIV alone. In other words, neither the Left nor the AIDS movement can afford to sleep on the issue of hepatitis C.

AIDS is now the leading cause of death among Black women aged 25 to 34. Nearly half of

Black men who have sex with men are HIV positive. I'm not saying that people with HIV aren't living full, healthy lives, with stigma being their most pressing HIV-related problem. But ACT UP Philly still has too many funerals. Within a few months several years ago, the New York City HIV/AIDS housing movement lost three beloved leaders—Joe Capestany and Joe Bostic of the New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN) and Keith Cylar, cofounder of Housing Works.



But it's also a movement full of life. Have you ever been to a global AIDS conference? The Zapatistas' Other Campaign (La Otra Campagna) was there last summer in Toronto. Korean activists were marching through the conference site against the impending US-Korea Free Trade Agreement. South Africans demanded treatment, Indian activists in bright colors chanted, "Big Pharma – Quit India!" and a Russian activist speaking at the closing plenary said, "Down with the imperialism of the pharmaceutical companies!" It was like the Social Forum, without the standing ovation (activists had to demand that people with AIDS be allowed to speak at the global AIDS conference).

And where else but the AIDS community have you seen heterosexual ex-drug users bond so closely with the most fabulously gender-bending queers? (This is not a rhetorical question, I'm sure it happens elsewhere, and I'd love to hear about it!) The AIDS movement at its best links together some of the most pressing issues of our time: homelessness, prison, the war on drugs, gender, sexuality, immigration, and displacement.

But if you want to tackle one thing, I'd say the Left can start with stamping out any tendencies toward HIV denialism, the idea that HIV does not really cause AIDS. While handing out flyers for the AIDS march at the Social Forum, my friend encountered some folks who said things like, "Well, if they would just stop taking those medicines that make them sick…." These comments were fairly insulting to my friend, who is HIV positive. This foolishness would not take root in the Left without our (the Left's) willingness to let our intelligent distrust of pharmaceutical companies go uncomplicated by any understanding of the privilege many of us experience—not having to deal with HIV, and not living in communities whose health is compromised in so many ways by systemic racism, poverty, homophobia and transphobia. For more information about HIV denialism, please see AIDSTruth.org or the website of South Africa's Treatment Action Campaign

A moment of possibilities

Partly to push visibility of AIDS issues in the Left, and in the tradition of marches at the global AIDS conference, AIDS activists at the Social Forum decided to march up from the basement of the Atlanta Civic Center, through the lobby filled with people milling around t-shirts and literature, out the doors and past the tables outside. It was a fun, chaotic moment that people responded to with excitement and support. We stopped across from the Health Tent, where among the activists who joined us was Panama Vicente Alba, a longtime New York City labor and police brutality activist and former Young Lords Party member. I was thrilled and surprised to see him get on the mic (at the invitation of NYCAHN), because I'd never thought of him as an AIDS activist.

NYCAHN's Jennifer Flynn enlightened me to the fact that Panama has been an AIDS activist for more than 15 years. "Needle exchange exists in the Bronx because of Panama," she said, and I was struck by how within my own mind I have such a separation between my lefty world and my AIDS activist world that it has gotten me to where I'm putting people into boxes. Jennifer also pointed out that the Young Lords were well known for tackling tuberculosis, and for their understanding of how government neglect in communities of color leads to epidemics.

I had slept on the fact of Panama's deep involvement with the campaign to demand HIV treatment for people on waiting lists in Puerto Rico. He had been in New Orleans at the HIV Prevention Leadership Summit in May, one of the activists whose graceful and somber protest interrupted a Bush administration speaker to draw attention to the crisis in Puerto Rico. "We know that more than a thousand people are on waiting lists for HIV medicines," Panama told me. "But the mayor of San Juan said nobody died. As long as Puerto Rico is a colony of the U.S., this is the political reality that exists. We need a third party, outside the colonial government, to allocate the funds."

The moment Panama united the AIDS movement and the Left was for me a moment of the clouds parting and the stars emerging to show our ships the way forward. Let's take the opportunity now, with the excitement the Social Forum has hopefully instilled in us, to chart our courses a little closer together, share our stories, and really listen to each other.

In solidarity,

Suzy Subways
Philadelphia

Editor, Solidarity Project, Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), 2006 – present
Independent AIDS community journalist and active/inactive member of ACT UP Philly, 2004 – present
Assistant Editor, POZ Magazine, 2001 – 2004
Founding member, Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM), City University of New York, 1995/96 – 2001
Member, New York Local, Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, 1995 – 98

my body, my voice, my weapon

By Jessica

I decided to write this article because of something that happened to me a few months ago. The day that it happened it changed me in a really incredible way. It made me realize that I am my own weapon. My body and my voice and my mind are the only weapon that I have to protect myself, and the people around me. I want to clarify that I wrote this to pose a few questions: why is it that violence against women is so commonplace that we barely even notice it? Why do we tend to blame the victims of domestic violence? What can we do to prevent these sort of I do not intend this story to serve as an answer to these deeply rooted problems so much as a question.

I take the train every day to go to and from work. One night on my way home I got off the train and as I was walking down the stairs I heard someone crying. I looked around and in the doorway to an apartment a man was beating a woman. My phone had died so I couldn't call anyone. I had to do something myself. As I was walking over to them he threw her on the ground and was kicking her in the stomach. Without even thinking about it I looked him in the eyes and said "Can I help you with something?" The woman ran behind me. I was bigger than her and about the same size as him. I tried to be as calm as possible. She hid behind me and he stood in front of me trying to hit her with her purse. The whole time he was screaming at her about how she knows him and about disrespect amongst other things. He looked at me and said "Are you gonna fight me girl?" I felt huge. I felt like I could have beaten him. I felt like every woman who had ever been beaten was growing inside of my gut. I felt like I was going to explode with all the anger I had ever felt towards men like him. But then I realized that I was better than him, even if I wanted to seriously hurt him. I wanted to be better and bigger.

My dad says that men who hurt women are cowards. I was going to beat this guy. But I wasn't going to do it his way. I was going to make him know that I was a woman, and that together this woman and I were better and stronger than him. I stayed calm and said "No I don't. I just want you to leave us alone." I grabbed her hand and started walking towards the bus stop where there were about 20 people standing around. He still had her purse and was standing across the street yelling at her. She asked for her purse back and he stormed across the street and threw all of her belongings under a bus. He chased us inside the corner store. I started screaming for help and for someone to call the police. No one did, no one helped. They just stood there. There were two young women laughing at us and about how stupid we were. The reactions of the people around us astounded me. Once she was inside and he had left I went outside and started screaming at people to help. I was asking how they could just stand there. I realize now that violence is such a part of life. It is so normal to see women being hurt and to see pain that people aren't even fazed by it. After I started calling people out two guys went in to help her. I ran into the street and got her wallet. I went into the store and hugged her really hard. She was shaking and crying. I said "I am so sorry," and walked away.

> "I was going to beat this guy. But I wasn't going to do it his way."

I left and didn't go back. I was afraid that he would follow me home because I lived a few blocks from where this happened. As I walked I started crying. I was screaming. I couldn't believe that it had just happened. For the next few weeks I talked to lots of people about what had happened. I asked people what they would have done in my position. The most popular answer I got was, "call the police", or "you should have just gone home and called the police." Even if I had a working phone, calling the police probably wouldn't have helped. They don't usually come when you call them in my neighborhood. And if they did come what would they have done?

I have been thinking about what I can do to cope with this situation and how I can help women in my community deal with domestic violence. In my research I have come across some interesting ideas and actions to help get the word out about domestic violence. I will list a few in the next issue of the defenestrator. In most of my research I came across information about helping victims of abuse. This is obviously a very important part of dealing with domestic violence. Another important aspect of dealing with domestic violence that I didn't find a lot of information about was helping abusers deal with their issues. In the next issue of the defenestrator there will be an article on how to deal with situations without police involvement. In that article I will include ideas on how to help both the abused and the abuser in domestic violence situations along with a list of ideas for actions you can take in your area and information on safety plans for dealing with domestic violence.

Resources

If you or a woman you know is being abused, please call the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hot line at 1-866-SAFE-014

Hot Line Numbers
Women Against Abuse (215) 386-7777
Lutheran Settlement House (215) 739-9999
Women In Transition (215) 751-1111
Women Organized Against Rape (215) 985-3333
National Domestic Violence Hot line 1-800-799-7233

En Espanol
Congreso de Latinos Unidos (215) 291-8742
Lutheran Settlement House (215) 235-9992

book review:

Are Prisons Obsolete?

by Angela Davis

reviewed by dave onion

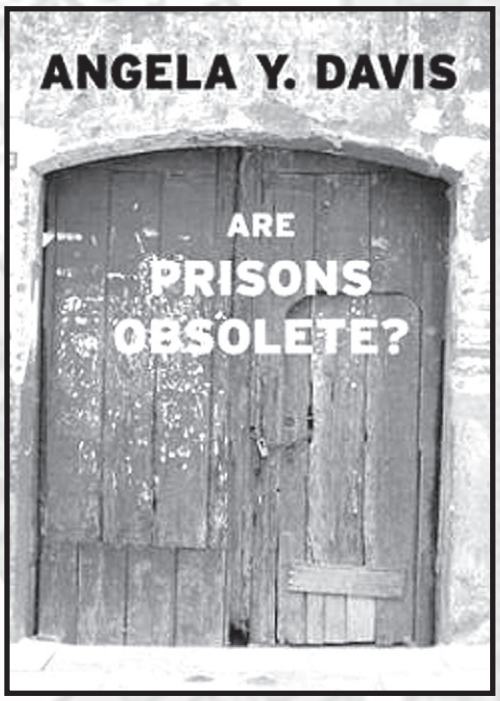
The title of Angela Davis' book Are Prisons Obsolete (2003) sounds nothing short of utopian. Here in the US, as Davis points out, prisons are integral to everyday life. In poor communities and communities of color, nearly everyone has family or friends who are among the 2.5 million plus doing time in this country. Television and pop culture in general (where pop culture = cop culture) reminds the rest of us that prisons are part of society. But for those of us actively seeking out ways of being and organizing society that don't rely on coercion or institutional violence, some utopian imagination is necessary (can we create it, if we can't even imagine it?). But APO isn't exactly that. Davis delivers a short book of historical context for what is now a monstrous soul devouring industry, but one which she shows is a relatively recent development and one which we should be working our way beyond. Besides, the book is an excellent primer on prisons.

APO uses some powerful statistics from Davis' home state, California, to show how prisons have surged in the last decades. When she first became an anti-prison activist in the sixties she relates how she was "astounded to learn there were then close to two hundred thousand people in prison." By the time this book was published in 2003 that number had grown to around 2.2 million.

Throughout the book, Davis shows the connections between the expansion of prisons to capitalism and slavery. While the emergence of penitentiaries near the beginning of the American Revolution initially appeared often as a progressive reform to previous forms of corporal and capital punishment inherited from the English, the reformers, mostly Quakers, disregarded many of the racist and authoritarian elements the new prisons inherited and reproduced. To many observing their emergence, the penitentiary looked a lot like slavery. Davis lays this out clearly, starting with the creation of the Black Codes, a set of laws which were imposed after the abolition of slavery to replace the former Slave Codes.

"The new Black Codes proscribed a range of actions- such as vagrancy, absence from work, breach of job contracts, the possession of firearms, and insulting gestures or acts - that were criminalized only when the person was black." The Black Codes, combined with the clause in the Thirteenth Amendment which abolishes slavery "except as punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted," created a legal situation where a newly freed slave could be returned to a new alternate slavery for anything ranging from an insult to broadly defined "vagrancy."

Before emancipation, ninety-nine percent of prisoners were white. Within a short time after emancipation and as a result of the Black Codes, southern prisons quickly



filled up with black prisoners. The accompanying public opinion held that because so many freed slaves were subsequently imprisoned "that African Americans were inherently criminal and particularly prone to larceny." It sounds eerily familiar to todays criminalization and fear mongering of black youth.

The similarity in working conditions between prison labor and slave labor also show strong continuity from times of slavery through the 13th amendment transition , industrial capitalism to our present day corporatized world. Through convict leasing, prisons rented out convicts for alternative cheap labor. In Alabama coal mines, for instance, prisoners carried out dirty and dangerous work as miners, leased from prisons for as little as $18.50 per month. The profit in convict leasing was enormous and unlike slaves whose life had economic value for slaveholders, prisoners on lease could be worked to death and often were. According to contemporaries, leased convicts imprisoned under the Black Codes often fared worse than they had as slaves:

"The records of a Mississippi plantation in the Yazoo Delta during the late 1880s indicate that the prisoners ate and slept on bare ground without blankets or mattresses, and often without clothes. They were punished for "slow hoeing" (ten lashes), "sorry planting" (five lashes), and "being light with cotton" (five lashes). Some who attempted to escape were whipped "till the blood ran down their legs"; others had a metal spur riveted to their feet. Convicts dropped from exhaustion, pneumonia, malaria, frostbite, consumption, sunstroke, dysentery, gunshot wounds, and "shackle poisoning" (the constant rubbing of chains and leg irons against the bare flesh)."

The Road to Hell is Paved With Good Intentions

The emergence of penitentiaries, Davis explains, comes always in the context of social developments of the time. The French and American revolutions with the emergence of the bourgeoisie as an influential class, were introducing radical new ideas on the individual rights and sovereignty (at the time more or less only applicable to white men), rights which could then of course once realized be taken away. It was also at this time that labor began to be quantified and compensated with money.

"...the computability of state punishment in terms of time - days, months, years - resonates with the role of labor time as the basis of computing the value of capitalist commodities. Marxist theorists of punishment have noted that precisely the historical period during which the commodity form arose is the era during which penitentiary sentences emerged as the primary form of punishment."

The Penitentiary was originally a Quaker vision of reforming some of the cruelest products of European and colonial imaginations. Punishment for crimes included drawing and quartering, burning at the stake, and confinement in jails which were disease ridden and filthy. The Quaker concept of the penitentiary characterized prisons as a place where instead of the filthy, immoral, alcohol and prostitute ridden British jails, the criminal would be confined to a room alone, maybe containing a bible, and atone for their crimes through a process of self-reflection and self-reform. A technological innovation introduced with the penitentiary was the panopticon, a form of prison architecture where guards can see all prisoners but no prisoner can see if the guard is watching them. Though reformist, these ideas were motivated by not so much the desire to help or improve the lives of prisoners, but because conditions inside the prison offended their sensibilities both aesthetic and religious. In fact some pre-penitentiary jails had some relatively high degrees of freedom. Alcohol passed freely among prisoners and prostitutes came and left as they wanted. In some cases prisoners would leave the jail for stretches of time.

Penitentiaries did have critics from day one, including Charles Dickens who was horrified by a visit to Eastern Penitentiary in 1842: "I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony that this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years , inflicts upon the sufferers..."

Dickens was talking about the isolation which prisoners today still experience today when confined to Administrative Segregation units (Ad Seg). Supermax prisons, invented as a one up on Maximum Security prisons put the entire prison population in lock own, resulting in entire prisons where many inmates have been so psychologically and emotionally damaged, often with explicit intentions to do so that any release or return to "normal" life will have them quickly returning to prison. Unlike the days when penitentiaries were considered a "reform", todays Supermax and Ad Seg units make no pretense of rehabilitation.

Gender and Prisons

A chapter of the book is devoted to the gendered elements of prisons. While only accounting for about 5% of all prisoners, women are the fastest growing population in prisons and are, unlike most men, subject to intensely sexualized treatment and conditions. The roots of which Davis traces through the history of reform movements: Reformers like Quaker Elizabeth Fry pushed for a "female approach to punishment". Reforms introduced an all female staff (to lessen sexual temptation considered to be the root of all female criminality) and "cottages" where women prisoners could learn domestic duties such as cooking, sewing and cleaning. Most of these changes again had less to do with human rights so much as they had the effect of systemically maintaining women's roles and reform women who deviated from sexual norms to accept a submissive social position.

Not every woman's place in society was considered worth saving. Black and Native American women were disproportionately sentenced to men's prisons and black women in prison after the Civil War were put on chain gangs with men. Racism for women prisoners was further compounded by the influence of the eugenics movement (then a popular scientific theory) "which sought to have genetically inferior women removed from social circulation for as many of their child bearing years as possible."

Starting with forced strip searches and vaginal/anal searches upon entering prison as recounted by Assata Shakur, Davis goes on to show how sexual assault continues systemically during incarceration. Guards make regular use of their "duties" to grope women's breasts during pat downs, room and strip searches. Quoting a report on Sexual Abuse of Women in US Prisons: "We found that all male correctional employees have vaginally, anally and orally raped female prisoners and sexually assaulted and abused them. We found that in the course of committing such gross misconduct, male officers have not only used actual or threatened physical force, but have also used their near total authority to provide or deny goods or privileges to female prisoners to compel them to have sex..."

Prison Industrial Complex

As capitalist globalization has seen a rise in power of capital over people and human rights in the last decades, the prison industry too has joined the party. With the emergence of private prisons (and the profitability of prisons, prisoners and convictable crimes with long sentences), prisons in general have expanded incredibly. Hand in hand with for profit prisons run by corporations has come new prison labor at prices that rival developing world sweatshops. Davis calls this the "Prison Industrial Complex". Having to think up post cold war marketing strategies, cold-war profiteers turned their creative energy toward social control, in particular profits which could be reaped off the criminal justice/punishment industry. The profits in the meantime roll in from subjects for medical studies, nearly free prison labor, prisoners and prisons as a market as themselves and from a slightly different vantage point, the avalanche of cop culture that fills the airwaves.

As a Norwegian criminologist is quoted in APO:
"Companies that service the criminal justice system need sufficient quantities of raw materials to guarantee long term growth.... in the criminal justice system the raw material is prisoners, and industry will do what is necessary to guarantee a steady supply. For the supply of prisoners to grow, criminal justice policies must ensure a sufficient number of incarcerated Americans regardless of whether crime is rising or the incarceration is necessary."

And as black prisoners are reaching a percentage of the population similar to that during the times of convict leasing, today's prison policy is reaching into the future and across the world. Globally governments are taking cues from the US and signing contracts with the giant prison corporations. In Turkey prisoners held a "death fast" in response to the construction of US style prisons. South Africa recently introduced the Supermax, the most repressive form of US prisons, "just after initiating the project of initiating a democratic, non-racist, and non-sexist society", a big step backward toward that goal.

Abolition

The final chapter of APO addresses the some of the questions that for prison abolitionists never cease. If not prisons, then what? The first part of the book already makes clear that prisons are a relatively recent thing. Knowing the history helps us to remember other forms of justice that predate our own model. Responses to violence and injustice has varied greatly over history. We also know that prisons have a racist history that so far it has only been able to compound. Even forms of punishment that had been reformed out of the system are now back, such as the death penalty and prison labor. Prisons as we know them as Davis explains are "a set of symbiotic relationships among correctional communities, transnational corporations, media conglomerates, guards unions and legislative and court agendas".

Davis suggests an entirely different system of justice. She suggests looking beyond prison alternatives like house arrests or surveillance, and instead look towards a continuum of alternatives to imprisonment - demilitarization of schools, revitalization of education at all levels, a health system that provides free physical and mental care for all, and a justice system that is based on reparation and reconciliation rather than retribution, vengeance and profit.

To further develop strategies of decarceration, or ways to keep our people out of the system's way: drug use should be decriminalized to counteract systemic racism in prisons. Free drug programs need to be available as a first resort to anyone. Decriminalizing all immigrants, another strategy for decarceration. Same goes for imprisoning women who fight back or escape from sexual violence. Developing strategies to minimize violence women face from both intimate relationships and relationships with the state. Decriminalizing entire classes targeted by the Prison Industrial Complex, another strategy to decarcerate.

But then aside from minimizing contact with the criminal injustice system, comes how to handle those who assault the rights and bodies of others. Here Davis tells the story of a successful case of restorative justice shortly after the fall of Apartheid in South Africa. The story is moving, but disappointing in that the situation took place so far away, and though inspirational and touching lacks some of what I was looking for in APO. Which is much more tactical. For instance, how does one take principled stands when confronting such things as assaults on our bodies and freedoms? Not in APO, there are some examples worth checking out. Projects like Critical Resistance NY's Harm Free Zone and Philly's Pissed work with sexual assaulters, just a couple examples off the top of my head. But that's raw material for a different article...

Coming Out' for the Palestine Solidarity Movement

By Dan Berger and Nava EtShalom, June 1, 2007

originally published in in Wire Tap magazine

On June 10, the first, ever international solidarity march and lobby day in the U.S. will call for an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

Issue: Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Why? Forced expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948 and Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights in 1967.

Action: The first, ever national march and lobby day in the U.S. exclusively focused on ending the Israeli occupation, reshaping discourse, and expressing international solidarity.

Anniversaries are wonderful, terrible things. They mark moments of celebration and commemoration. Anniversaries cement old stories, but they also give us a chance to turn long-accepted stories inside out -- to ask questions, pose challenges, resist dominant narratives. On the fourth anniversary of "Shock and Awe," people across the United States took to the streets to call for an end to the Iraq war. In Iraq, people mourned the hundreds of thousands killed in the past four years -- and the millions killed in more than a dozen years of U.S. involvement in their country.

June 2007 marks the 40th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. (Despite the highly publicized 2005 unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, Israel continues military actions there and maintains a hermetic seal over the region.) Next May will be the 60th anniversary of the Nakba, the catastrophic events of 1948 in which Zionist paramilitaries destroyed more than 500 villages through massacre and intimidation, and at least 750,000 Palestinians became refugees. These are terrible anniversaries. These are anniversaries which call our attention and demand our response.

Israel's supporters celebrate these anniversaries with Israeli Independence Day every May. Around the world, celebrations obscure the Nakba experienced by Palestinians in the form of ongoing isolation, economic devastation, and military violence aided by the erection of a 730-kilometer concrete wall. Enabled by U.S. military aid, this massive construction project further confiscates Palestinian territory and isolates Palestinian communities throughout the region.

Condemned by much of the world as an "apartheid wall," Israel's cheekily named "separation fence" divides Palestinians from their agricultural land, their friends and family -- even, in some cases, their next-door neighbors. Israel's unilateral boundary-making is designed to make as big an Israeli state as it can with as few Palestinians in it as possible. It turns Israel into the ultimate gated housing development, armed and exclusive, leaving Palestinians a bisected, militarily monitored mouse hole of a home outside the wall. Whether these Bantustans ever become a state is immaterial: the wall makes it a place where simple municipal services are monumental tasks, where water is scarce, and where hospitals and schools in neighboring towns can be impossible to reach.

As the Wall grows, it impedes networks among Palestinians, including deep-rooted networks of nonviolent resistance. Despite the increasing difficulty of organizing in Palestine, the Bethlehem-based BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights has issued an international call for activists to creatively mark both the 40- and 60-year anniversaries in 2007 and 2008. The timing of this "40-60 campaign" is crucial: "This may well be the last decade anniversary when Palestinian eye-witnesses from the 1948 Nakba are still living," wrote BADIL organizers in their call. "Now more than ever, Palestinians are counting on local and global society to build pressure for the enforcement of international law -- the foundation for a just peace." The 40-60 anniversaries offer the chance for a range of creative action across borders: a chance to renew and rethink international solidarity. It reminds us that visionary thinking often comes first from those whose lives most depend on it. And yet, we all have roles to play in realizing such a world.

Solidarity for U.S. organizers starts with our own government's complicity. This has had particular resonance for Palestinians: Israel's military actions are made possible almost entirely by the United States. Israel Defense Forces speak Hebrew, but they demolish Palestinian houses and agriculture using U.S.-made Caterpillar bulldozers, drop Boeing missiles from Apache helicopters and F-16 fighter jets, and shoot at demonstrators with Colt-manufactured M-16s. U.S. tax money supports Israel to the tune of over $2 billion in annual military aid. This money, together with the Israeli government's manifest destiny land-grab ideology, make the ongoing occupation possible.

Across the United States, people have already marked the 40th and 60th anniversaries with protests, vigils, concerts, poetry readings, letter writing and other projects. The commemorations kick into high gear in June: thousands of people are expected to turn out in Washington, D.C., on June 10 as part of a Global Day of Action Against the Israeli Occupation, followed by a lobby day on June 11. The June 10-11 protest, teach-in, and lobbying are the first ever national actions specifically about the Israeli occupation. Sponsored by the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and United for Peace and Justice, and endorsed by dozens of religious, peace, student and Jewish groups, the weekend of events will bring a broad constituency to the nation's capitol to oppose occupation in any form. It is, says one of the organizers, a "coming out" for the Palestine solidarity movement in the United States -- a protest, a party, a program for change.

Two weeks later, thousands of people will converge in Atlanta for the first U.S. Social Forum, which will bring together an array of issues, campaigns, and projects. Social forums are new political spaces, where incipient movements gather to plot and plan, build networks of trust and camaraderie, and find ways to affirm that the only way forward will be together. Palestine solidarity organizers will be running workshops and panels at the forum along with the hundreds of others. But what the forum truly allows is another stepping stone toward forging a twenty-first century radicalism that is democratic, internationalist and rooted in a politics of solidarity. The horrors of home demolitions, mass incarceration, militarized policing and lack of quality education are what empire looks like around the world -- no matter the ghetto, reservation, barrio or Bantustan. The social forum creates a space for those connections to blossom.

The first anti-war march doesn't end the war. But national mobilizations and projects like the 40-60 campaign could change our basic public assumptions about what is at stake in Palestine and how that relates to our lives and work in the United States. We can change common sense about the roots of the conflict, highlighting U.S. funding, weapons and colonial mindset as the tools that enable Israel's ongoing land grab.

Sixty years is too long for exile. Forty years is too long for occupation. But besides marking the passage of terrible time and events, these anniversaries remind us that 60 years and 40 years are relatively recent. Despite the racist spin we tend to see in the United States -- ancient conflict, time out of mind, clash of civilizations -- this is a new political conflict with roots some of us can still remember, sponsorship funded by our taxes, and solutions we all have a responsibility to imagine. That is the power of the 40-60 campaign and the potential of the June mobilizations. Each one reminds us to think broadly, creatively and collaboratively -- to mark also the anniversaries of conquest within our communities and to forge new memories of freedom.

Done right, an international response to these anniversaries could imagine solutions beyond two unequal states. It could break the enforced silence and narrowness of ideas in U.S. popular discourse on the subject. It could interrupt the myths that Palestinian self-determination is anti-Semitic and that Israel speaks for Jews. It could challenge more than the occupation: by taking on the Nakba of 1948, we could challenge the power of states to mobilize racism and nationalism in destroying lives -- in Palestine, in Puerto Rico, in prisons, in manifest destiny and genocide in the United States. It could give life to a vibrant international solidarity that takes practical steps toward the realization of a way out of empire -- and into the realms of the only peace that is possible: one that is built on justice.

For more information on the anti-occupation March on Washington Sunday, June 10, visit EndTheOccupation.org or UnitedForPeace.org. For more on the 40-60 campaign, see Badil.org. For more on the U.S. Social Forum, check out USsocialForum.org. For news about Palestine, see ElectronicIntifada.net.

Dan Berger and Nava EtShalom are writers and activists in Philadelphia. Dan Berger is the author of Outlaws of America (AK Press, 2006) and co-editor of Letters from Young Activists (The Nation Books, 2005). Nava EtShalom is a poet and currently a Pew Fellow in the Arts. They are each involved in an array of Palestine solidarity and other organizing projects.

An interview with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

speaking on anarchy, autonomy and indigenism in Bolivia

The South American Nation of Bolivia has filled the headlines of the global press with their fight against water privatization, struggle for nationalization of Gas, non-compliance with Free Trade policies and the election of South America's first indigenous president Evo Morales. These struggles are rooted in the long history of Indigenous resistance to colonialism and imperialism in Bolivia. In an interview conducted during her recent stay in Pittsburgh. subaltern theorist, Aymara Sociologist and Historian Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, discussed Bolivian Anarchism, the health benefits of the Coca plant and the Cocaleros (Coca Growers) fight for sovereignty.

Andalusia: Could you talk about some of the things that you have uncovered in your research about Anarchism in Bolivia as related ot the struggles of the Aymara and Quecha people.?

Silvia: We started as an Aymara collective that basically wanted to uncover the Aymara and Quechua struggles and we discovered that there were many links with Urban Aymara communities that had organizations linked both to the indigenous communities and they were linked to the union movement which in the 20's was basically anarchist.

What happened in Bolivia is that there had been two official histories: the official history written by the Nationalist Party—MNR—that basically denies all the agency of both workers and peasants and indigenous peoples; and the official history of the Left that forgets about anything that was not Marxist,, thus eclipsing or distorting the autonomous history of anarchist unions,

So, also it's the links between the anarchists and the indigenous people that gave them another nuance because communities are self sustained entities and they basically are places where anti-authoritarian type of organization have leaders but as a rotational thing that is a service to the community. It's kind of a burden to be a leader for a community, you know? It's something you do once in a lifetime and you do because you ought to do, and that the community says its your turn or the turn of your family. So, that creates a totally different relationship with power structures and, in a way, it decolonizes power and, to a certain extent, gives it back to the people.

That is what fascinated us most about the communities and, on the other hand, it led us to discover that communities were not only rural but also urban and worked with Luis Cusicanqui and other anarchist leaders because they had such an affinity between the way they saw struggle, autonomy, domination, and oppression.

Andalusia: Anarchism in general, I think, is perceived as a European tradition that then has been brought to the United States and places like Argentina and people don't generally associate anarchism with places like Bolivia or places in Africa, etcetera. Could you talk about how anarchism was in line with many of the beliefs of the Aymara and Quechua people and the way their communities were governed.

Silvia: A general point of departure of Bolivian history with the rest of Latin America is that many (especially anarchist) have had to go through the filter of their own traditions of struggle that are basically anti-colonial. So, what happened is that there was like a mutual breeding, a mutual fertilization of thought and an ability to interpret universal doctrine that is basically European doctrine in Bolivian, Chola and Aymara terms.

That's why Bolivian anarchism is so important, because it has roots in the grassroots urban unions because most urban workers were also Indian in Bolivia and still are. 62 percent of the population in Bolivia t have been self-identified as Indigenous, as Aymara, Quechua, Guarani and as many other Indigenous peoples.

So we have a majority, even in urban settings and therefore, have a particular brand of is Anarcho-Indianism. And also it is Anarcho-Indianism-Feminism because the Chola figure, the women, the female fighter, the female organizer is part of Bolivian daily life. If you have been there you know what the market looks like, how strong these women are, how in solidarity they are when there is a march coming from the Cocaleros, where there is this sacrifice marches that last ten, twenty days without much to eat. These women prepare like these huge pots of soup they give away to the poorest people. They have such a tradition of union associations that self-organize. And they self-organize basically in the administration of space,. The market is a space and it's very symbolic that they take over this space and just grab it from the municipality or from the central state.

So, you have a very specific Chola brand of anarchism that explains why it was so attractive for so, so many people. And it explains why one of the most salient things in Bolivian and anarchist history is that their leaders made their speeches in Aymara. And just thinking that another non-western language, non-European language is filtering the thoughts of anarchists and helping to phrase, to express the rage, the proposals, the ideas; it gives such richness, you know? In Aymara you can say, "us" in four different ways.

> In Aymara you can say, "us" in four different ways. There are many forms of being together so you have a richness in anarchism that obviously is not very classical anarchism.

Andalusia: Then how do these struggles of Indigenous people in the 20's and 30's relate to struggles against neo-liberalism today?

Silvia: Liberalism made their big reforms in the late 19th century which were anti-Indian reforms. They killed the market for Indigenous crafts and goods. They took Indian lands. They jailed all the leaders of the communities. They wanted them to become servants of the haciendas and have a quiet and domesticated, low- paid labor force in the mines and in the factories.

You have second now that has basically the same thing except for the issue of haciendas. Haciendas are out of date in Bolivia because of agrarian reform. Yet there is still a need for agrarian reform because the big land ownership has moved, it has been displaced to the lowlands and still, it's doing the same thing. It's usurping indigenous lands.

So you have basically the same set of problems and aggressions and you obviously have cultural differences, a cultural gap because then, at those times, you didn't have much of a literate working class, or literate leadership in the communities. The communities had many problems just trying to understand the language of the documents that decreed their extinction, or decreed their laws against them. So they created a movement in favor of schools. That was another link with the workers because the workers, especially the anarchists, had their own self-organized schools. The indigenous communities—came in search for support for their schools and found a very fertile terrain in the anarchist unions.

Andalusia: Could you talk more about the struggles of the Cocaleros. Here in the United States there's very little dialogue about their struggle and people don't even realize that there is a difference between coca and cocaine.

Silvia: Well, let me tell you, I have been researching and every time I come to the U.S. I go to the libraries with one question: "Why is coca so underground, so unknown, so mistreated, so stigmatized? Why do people believe all these lies. Why can you get any drug but not coca. It's because if coca was a drug you could get it.

And I'm finding a big conspiracy against coca in the late 19th century by the pharmaceutical industry. And it is a conspiracy against people's health in general. But the conspiracy against coca was particularly mean and ill because it was a conspiracy against a people. The Indians who had been in touch with coca for millennia and have been able to use it in a variety of ways; as a mild stimulant for work, as a ritual item, as a recreational commodity that you chew in parties, in wakes, in weddings, or even as a symbol of identity and of struggle.

So, coca leaves are almost pervasively present in the Bolivian context but there is like this press blindness, blindness of the media. Blindness of the media that in many senses is dictated by the U.S. embassy, you know? It's the U.S. embassy that dictates the policy on coca and blackmails the government so that if we don't do as they say, the funds for development or, I don't know, the funds they give to the Bolivian government will be cut. I always said to the leaders, "Let them cut! We won't die! And we can't live forever on somebody else's alimony."

But I think it's hard because really there is a problem of poverty; but poverty in Bolivia is constructed, it's a result of bad policies! And it's a result of being robbed of our resources. And so I think the coca issue is very, very enlightening in terms of what the power of interests of corporations can do to truth, yeah. Just veil the truth to such an

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The War on Terror

Terre Haute Prison's New Communications Management Unit

Excerpted from: Special Report, Dr. Rafil A. Dhafir at Terre Haute Prison's New Communications Management Unit

By Katherine Hughes

AT PRECISELY 7 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 11, 2006, 17 federal prisoners across the country were taken out of their cells, held in isolation for two days, then bused to the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Terre Haute, Indiana. Here the government quietly began implementing the first stages of a secret new program, the Communications Management Unit (CMU). A completely self-contained unit housing almost exclusively Arab and/or Muslim inmates, it eventually will hold approximately 85 prisoners.

Special new rules set out in a "CMU Institutional Supplement" dated Nov. 30, 2006 include severe restrictions on prisoner communication. Contact with family and friends is limited; outgoing and incoming mail is monitored and copied, with a one- to two-week delivery delay; and no contact visits are allowed. Instead of 300 minutes of phone time a month, prisoners may receive only one 15-minute call a week, which the warden has the power to reduce to just three minutes a month. Unlike the usual weekly or biweekly all-day contact visits, visits in the CMU are for two hours, just twice a month, and are restricted to non-contact only. Calls and visits must be conducted in English unless prior arrangement is made.

According to Jennifer Van Bergen, the journalist who broke the CMU story, there are only three government offices—all within the Justice Department—that have authority to issue changes to federal prison operations: the Office of the Director of the Prisons Bureau, the Office of Legal Counsel, and the Office of the U.S. Attorney General. Van Bergen was unable to get confirmation of where the authorization originated. The Bureau of Prisons Web site (www.bop.gov) does not list CMU among its facility abbreviations, and a search of the site for "CMU" or "Communications Management Unit" yields no result.

Bureau of Prisons spokeswoman Traci Billingsley said that although the CMU's present population consists of inmates convicted of terrorism-related cases, the unit will not be limited to prisoners who fit that definition. Many of those currently held there, however, are not considered high-risk prisoners, meaning the government definition of a terrorism-related case needs to be examined closely.

CMU Prisoner Dr. Rafil A. Dhafir and The War on Muslim Charities

Some of the major casualties in the government's "war on terror" have been Muslim charities and their principals. Two CMU inmates, Enaam Arnaout of Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) and Dr. Rafil A. Dhafir of Help the Needy (HTN), were defendants in Islamic charity cases. Neither has been convicted of charges that have anything to do with terrorism: Arnaout accepted a plea agreement by pleading guilty to one charge of "racketeering conspiracy," and after a long trial Dhafir was convicted of violating the International Economic Emergency Powers Act (IEEPA) and white-collar crime.

The government justifies its targeting of Islamic charities by saying it is going after the money funding terrorism. Just three months after 9/11, in December 2001, the government raided and closed down the country's three largest Islamic charities: the Holy Land Foundation (HLF), the Global Relief Foundation (GRF), and the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), accusing them of supporting terrorism. In each case, alleged "guilt by association" meant that the charities' assets were frozen and their principals imprisoned without bail.

A founding member of the mosque in Syracuse, New York, Dhafir is a leader among the local Muslim community. An Iraqi-born oncologist, he has been a U.S. citizen for almost 30 years. Before his arrest, he and his wife, Priscilla, were very active in Syracuse civic affairs, and Dhafir often spoke at events and on local TV and radio about health and cancer care. In the early 1990s, in direct response to the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the brutal embargo on Iraq, he founded Help the Needy. For 13 years it sent food and aid to civilians suffering under U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq at the insistence of the U.S. and Britain. Dhafir devoted much of his life to prayer and charity, and government records showed that he donated half his income to charity every year. In his oncology practice he treated those without medical insurance for free, paying for their chemotherapy out of his own pocket.

Confident in his innocence and the American system of justice, Dhafir refused to accept a plea bargain, and the government piled on charges. When his case finally came to trial 19 months after his arrest, he faced a 60-count indictment of white-collar crime.

For more information visit <www.dhafirtrial.net>. Non-tax-deductible contributions in any amount may be sent to the Dr. Dhafir Appeal Fund, c/o Peter Goldberger, Esq., Attorney at Law, 50 Rittenhouse Place, Ardmore, PA 19003. Checks should be made payable to "Dr. Dhafir Appeal Fund."

Corporate Media Ignores New Mumia Crime Scene Photos

by Hans Bennet

"The newly discovered photographs reveal the fact that the police were actively manipulating evidence at the homicide scene. For example, their moving the police officer's hat from the roof of Billy Cook's vehicle to the sidewalk to make the scene more emotionally dramatic was fraudulent and criminal. It was as if they were setting up a scene, putting in props for a movie to be shot. That is incredible," said attorney Robert R. Bryan.

These photos were unveiled in Philadelphia by German author Michael Schiffmann, the week of May 17, but could not be presented to the court because of the narrow "four-issue" scope.

Schiffmann recounted how in May, 2006, he discovered two photographs on the Internet that were taken by the only press photographer immediately present at the 1981 crime scene: Pedro P. Polakoff, III. Upon contacting him, Polakoff told Schiffmann that he arrived within 12 minutes of hearing about the shooting on the police radio and about ten minutes before the Mobile Crime Unit (responsible for forensics and photographs) arrived. According to Polakoff, this unit had still not taken any photos when Polakoff left after 30-45 minutes at the scene.

Schiffmann published five of Polakoff's photos in his new book Race Against Death, and chose four of those to present to the US public on thousands of large posters spread around Philadelphia and at Abu-Jamal-News.com.

One photo is of Police Officer James Forbes, who testified in court that he had secured the weapons of both Faulkner and Abu-Jamal without touching them on their metal parts in order to not destroy potential fingerprints. Attorney Robert R. Bryan considers this photograph of Forbes to be the "most stunning example" of the "incompetent manner in which the police at the scene dealt with the evidence," because Forbes is "holding both pistols found at the scene in one hand, bare-handed! This is unthinkable. A nitwit could do better. Why were there no fingerprint tests? Why no ballistic examinations? It reminds me of a scene from 'The Keystone Cops,' the way the evidence was being handled and manipulated, except this was not funny."



Philly cop "not moving evidence"

Another, two-photo sequence shows that the police moved P.O. Faulkner's hat from the roof of Mumia's brother Billy Cook's car, and placed it instead on the sidewalk in front of 1234 Locust where it was later photographed by the police photographer.

The last photo is of the large, empty space directly behind P.O. Faulkner's car, where the second-most important prosecution witness, cab driver Robert Chobert, testified to have been parked when he claimed to have observed Mumia shoot Faulkner.

Schiffmann extensively interviewed Polakoff about what he saw and heard at the crime scene. Polakoff says that all the officers present expressed the firm conviction that Mumia had been the passenger in Billy Cook's VW and had shot and killed Faulkner by a single shot fired from the passenger seat of the car.

While this observation contradicts the official prosecution scenario that Abu-Jamal ran from across the street before shooting Faulkner, it strongly supports Schiffmann's original ballistics analysis and conclusion that a third person (not Abu-Jamal or Billy Cook) most likely shot and killed Faulkner. This 3rd person was Kenneth Freeman (Cook's friend and business partner), who, based on available evidence, was the passenger in Cook's car, and was therefore the black male that six eyewitnesses reported to see fleeing the scene moments before other police arrived.

Polakoff also told Schiffmann that the police opinion that the passenger was the shooter "was apparently based on the testimony of 3 witnesses who were still present at the crime scene, namely, by the parking lot attendant in charge of the parking lot on the Northern side of Locust Street, by a drug addicted woman apparently acquainted with the parking lot attendant, and another woman. As Polakoff later heard from colleagues in the media, the parking lot attendant had disap-peared the day after, while the drug-addicted witness died a couple of days later from an overdose."

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Health Democracy

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Excellent question. I've long regarded the Left as excellent when criticizing, and I've been good at this too, but the Left has been less focused on showing the world what we demand instead. We have the best columnists, the best filmmakers, the best cartoonists, but need to strengthen our social models. Even small examples have power. Over 1,000 media stories were done about Ithaca HOURS, nationally and internationally, and dozens about the Ithaca Health Alliance. Having said that, I'd note that the Left has been getting better at making social change sexy. Energy alternatives, mutual aid systems, bicycling, organic farms, co-op housing, land trusts, healthy living, worker ownership and all the systems that make us less dependent on this global empire are more effectively dramatized. Here in Philadelphia we have the capacity to create thousands of new jobs in healing services that are owned by residents, to provide these services at a fraction of current costs-- Ithaca has both a minimum wage and a maximum wage-- to relieve the emergency room pressure on medical centers, to return to doctors the authority to assist without time pressure, to return to humans the authority over their own bodies and the right to help one another. As importantly, co-op health plans sponsor Health Advocacy committees which address the public foundations of personal health-- clean air, clean food, clean water. http://www.healthdemocracy.org/advocacy.html

D: I came across an interesting quote in a reprinted commencement speech given by the author Mark Danner. He gives his "... favorite quotation from the Bush administration, put forward by the proverbial "unnamed Administration official" and published in the New York Times Magazine by the fine journalist Ron Suskind in October 2004. Here, in Suskind's recounting, is what that "unnamed Administration official" told him:

"The aide said that guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community,' which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality.' I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore,' he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors.... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.'"

PG: An excellent quote. Academia often merely reflects on "reality" while reality changes around them. I'll be teaching Metropolitan Ecology at Temple starting this fall, intending to teach how to make change. I've been a grassroots activist for 40 years and believe that, while action without theory is reckless, theory without action is useless. They stride together.

D: I feel like we come up against this as a newspaper. There's the "reality based" world and then there is the world of PR firms and public spectacles. Do you have any ideas about reaching people with the reality of the crisis of healthcare in this country and specifically in Philadelphia? Without the tools of mass media—the endless resources that these companies have to propagate their side of the story—what can we do to influence public opinion?

PG: Like I mentioned, Ithaca HOURS and Ithaca Health Alliance and Citizen Planners and many other of the programs I've started (http://www.paulglover.org) have broken through the media screen to prove that, not only are things bad but that average people can fix them. The Philly Orchard Project (POP) http://www.phillyorchards.org has existed three months and there have been four news articles. NOTE: POP intends to provide an alternate model for economic development. Rather than rely on gentrification to push our low-income residents, we establish land trusts that stabilize property value and rents, create new jobs derived directly or indirectly from urban permaculture.

D: Finally, do you have some recommendations for our readers interested in getting involved in Philahealthia or in creating their own initiatives along similar lines?

PG: Start a program by inventing a simple process by which people with little money can pool their time and skills to meet needs, give the program a name-- keep the acronym easy to remember-- get together with a few friends who agree, publicize the first meeting, explain the program, invite people to help out. Good graphics help. Cartoons are the best for making complicated subjects easy to understand. We must be ready to work within the law, then without the law if necessary. PhilaHealthia tried to negotiate with bureaucrats and to get our co-op legislation introduced by state legislators and by Governor Rendell's Health Care Reform task force, without success. So here we are.

To make PhilaHealthia happen, pledge to join (when 1,000 have pledged) by sending name, address, phone, email to paul5glover@yahoo.com. Let us know whether you already have an insurance policy, and tell us its name. We're also asking people to help hand out flyers, at Sicko and anywhere people gather. Stores can contact us for stacks of literature. 215 805-8330 or paul5glover@yahoo.com Additional legal help is welcome. And as I mentioned we're looking for candidates for the board of directors. Bylaws: http://www.healthdemocracy.org/bylaws.html

Against and Beyond the State

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regained control of the agenda when Marcos decided to interrupt his tour of the country. Certainly the struggle against the repression was and is crucial, but it is very important for us not to lose control of our own rhythms of struggle. This is something the Zapatistas have been very good at, on the whole, and it is a point emphasized for example by the MTD Solano, one of the most impressive piquetero groups in Argentina.

Once one begins to focus on these against-and-beyonds, these cracks in domination, then one's image of the world begins to change. We begin to see it not as a world of domination but as a world full of refusal-and-creations, full of dignities of all kinds.

MS: Many reading this conversation are already inspired by the movements growing across the globe, especially in Latin America, and will likely, or have already, begun to think, ok, so how do I move against and beyond the state? What does that mean and what could it look like? Should I go and spend time with autonomous movements? What do you say to people who ask these sorts of questions?

JH: There's no recipe, is there? Certainly I meet lots of people who have spent time in Zapatista communities and I'm always very impressed by them and what they've learnt. But I think the central point is probably the Zapatista principle of starting from where we are, to fight to transform where we are: not only to build the Movement (though that may be important), but to try to set our own agenda in whatever we are doing. In Marxist terms, to struggle for use value against value, creative or useful doing against abstract labor. And very important, to look around and recognize, to learn to see all the ways in which people are already struggling against and beyond capital, struggling for dignity in their everyday lives. The most terribly destructive idea on the left is the idea that we're special, that we're different. We're not – everybody rebels in some way: our problem is to recognize rebellion and find a way of touching it. The most profound challenge of the Zapatistas is when they say "we are perfectly ordinary people, therefore rebels": that is perhaps the most important thing – to understand the everyday nature of revolution.

Perhaps a more practical answer: there's a wonderful new book coming out by the Trapese Collective called *Do it Yourself* (Pluto Press, London, sometime soon) with a very practical guide to what we can do, setting up community gardens, organizing social centers, organizing without leaders, taking charge of our own health and education, and so on.

MS: What is one of the most inspiring moments that you have seen/felt in the last year? What made it so inspiring?

JH: Two answers.

The first is not a moment but a whole lot of moments, when I've been invited to all sorts of meetings of autonomous groups in Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala, here in Mexico and the experience is often just overwhelming, meeting the people involved in the struggles and seeing their commitment and enthusiasm and the way in which different social relations are really already a reality for so many people, and seeing especially the young people and the depth of their understanding and their capacities – in Guatemala, for example, I met a fourteen-year-old from the countryside who was doing regular radio broadcasts on topics such as the proposed Free Trade Agreement. The reality is running so far ahead of any theoretical reflections we make.

The second is just a few days ago, a short concert of music from Veracruz that I happened to find myself attending, and the musicians were amazing. It suddenly made me feel that this is what communism is about, not because it was free (it was), not because of the political content of the music (there wasn't any), but just because it was a moment in which time was suspended, in which creative or useful doing took absolute priority over abstract labor, use value over value, enjoyment over obligation. Perhaps we have to think of communism (or whatever we call it) not so much (or not just) in terms of space as in terms of time, as the breaking of time and the creation, expansion and multiplication of liberated moments.

John Holloway is the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* (Pluto Press, 2002) and co-author of *Zapatista! Rethinking Revolution in Mexico* (Pluto Press, 1998). Marina Sitrin is the editor of *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* (AK Press, 2006), (Spanish edition, Chilavert, Argentina, 2005) and forthcoming *Insurgent Democracies: Latin America's New Powers* (Citylights Press, 2007).



New Mumia Evidence

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Schiffmann concludes that "whatever it was that these witnesses saw or did not see, we will probably never know. Interestingly, neither of them ever appeared in any report presented by the police or the prosecution."

Polakoff reports that he was simply ignored when he repeatedly contacted the DA's office in 1982 and 1995 to give them his account--and his photos--of the crime scene.

While activist media websites like the IMC (indymedia.org) and Infoshop (infoshop.org) have enthusiastically reported on the photos, not even one mainstream media outlet has reported on them.

Linn Washington, Jr., says this media blackout shows "once again how this supposed information seeking institution shirks its ethical duties in the Abu-Jamal case to 'seek truth and report it.'

see more photos at http://abu-jamal-news.com/

Acupuncture continued from pg 4

ing skills, carpentry, plumbing, etc. Part of the idea of CSA clinics is to help liberate people from their roles as consumer/patients and help them re-claim their relationship to community and a broader sense of health and well-being.

We're so grateful for all the help we've gotten from everyone in West Philly. We can't wait for the first day we treat people in the beautiful and open space once grain storage for firehouse horses. We hope everyone will let us become as useful in Philly as WCA is in currently in Portland.

Philadelphia Community Acupuncture www.phillyacupuncture.com
Working Class Acupuncture www.workingclassacupuncture.org
Community Acupuncture Network www.communityacupuncturenetwork.org

Rohleder, Lisa. The Remedy: integrating acupuncture in U.S. healthcare
from www.lulu.com

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

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extent that you cannot separate; common sense has been overcome by this absurd idea that coca is cocaine. I have chewed coca since I was 16 years old. When I came to the states, of course you miss everything you don't have, but I'm not in an abstinence syndrome. I have an abstinence syndrome of coffee! When I quit coffee I had symptoms of being addicted to coffee but the coca leaves are not addictive. I just chew them and enjoy them everyday and if I don't have them I don't chew them and that's it. And I'm very healthy and I think so many people would be rid of osteoporosis and calcium deficits and gastric disorders and obesity and cardio-vascular problems and diabetes.


Andalusia and Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui

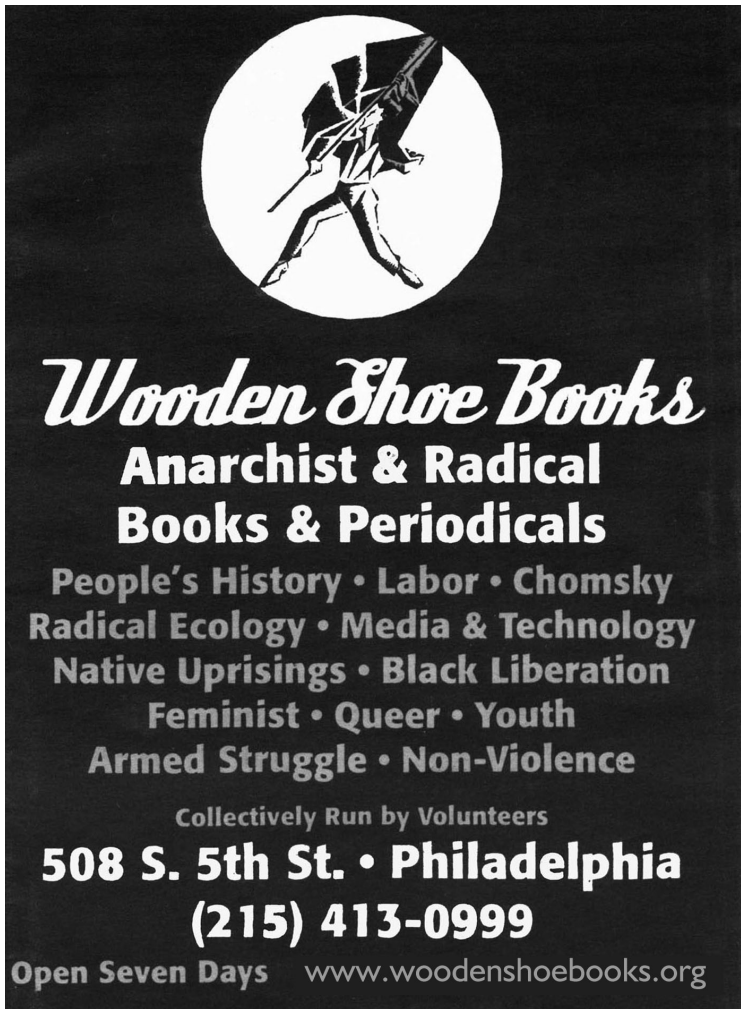
And that's why it is an enemy of the pharmaceuticals; because we wouldn't need all their shit! All their pills, all their venoms that make us believe that they are good and then they have side effects and then you go back, then they give you another thing, then you keep on going back and then you end up with having a full pharmacy in your drawer and then you feel miserable and you have lost control of your life. That's what they want and that's what we're against and coca is our big, big shield against companies taking over our bodies.

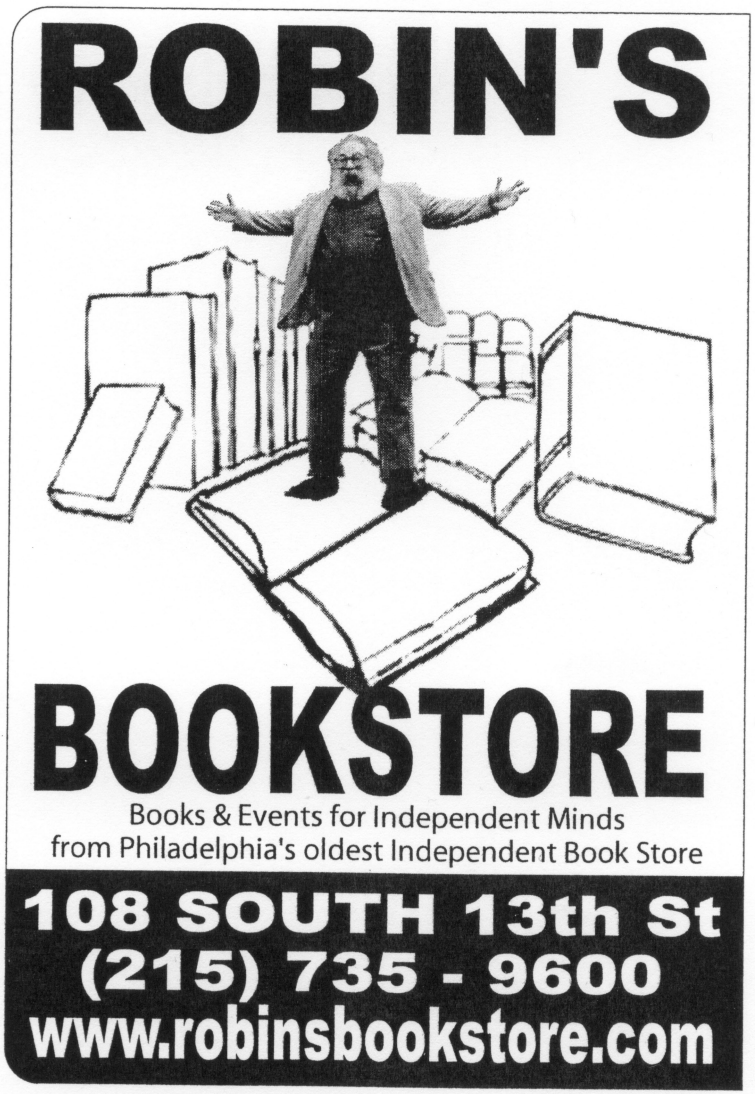
Andalusia: Then earlier you had mentioned one of the marches of the Cocaleros. Could you talk about some of the actions that people have taken to defend their rights to grow coca and their sovereignty?

Silvia: Yes. Well, I like to talk about things I really know first and there have been many, many marches. One of the most impressive ones was in 1994 and it is really very incredible to be a part of one of these events. And in 1998 when things were getting really bad because of forced eradication and assassinations of Cocaleros and army raids where they into the coca fields and destroyed everything was a daily occurrence. And there was this big march that I joined, more or less, half-way; more than half-way. And I was able to get into the rank and file Cocaleros within the march and see how there is this Ghandian ethics of self-sacrifice accompanied with coca. It's also a Ghandian ethics of not eating too much because you actually lose strength if you treat yourself too much. Eating is ok but if you engage in this, it's the spirit that carries your body. It is the force of the spirit and the force of the belief that goes and carries your body. And so your body has to be light and that's why you learn a lot about ethics when you do this type of struggle. And, on the other hand, you do some learning of solidarity, community, and self-help, and also sovereignty over the body. You are doing a self-inflicted sacrifice. But you're doing a sacrifice for a cause that is for the good of many people and it really feeds your spirit. It is something very important to have something beyond your own belly and to go for something beyond your own belly; and also to go for a cause that is for the whole of the Bolivian people because sovereignty is the missed task. No revolution of whatever kind—liberal revolution, nationalist revolution, Leftist—has really been freed from Imperialism, freed from colonial domination.

So, that task requires all the strength and these marches, vigils and hunger strikes have been, always, a typical characteristic of the Bolivian people. A peaceful type of non-violent actions—but so massive! so massive!—where people are ready to die. And that generosity, to be able to spare your own life, is very, very heart lifting, you know? And so, it gives people a strength to overcome many obstacles, to overthrow governments, and to even take governments. And so, I think that's a result of our strength; our collective strength.

This interview originally appeared on Rustbelt Radio, the Pittsburgh Indymedia's weekly review of news from the grassroots. To hear the complete interview you can go to http://pittsburgh.indymedia.org/news/2007/03/26831.php and to listen to Rustbelt Radio you can go to http://radio.indypgh.org







REBEL Calendar

Tuesday July 24th
The Real Surge: Grassrots Surge to IMPEACH Bush and Cheney
with Cindy Sheehan and Rev Lennox Underwood
2 events: *Independence Mall, Market St. between 5th and 6th, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM
*A Honk to Impeach Rally on Broad Street between Arch and Race Sts, from 4:00 to 5:30 PM

Thursday, July 26
Defenestrator movie night: Men with Guns
8pm Firehouse Bikes at 50th and Baltimore

Invisible/ Invincible Women
collaborative interactive art piece to explore how women in our society become invisible and lose their voice. Attendees are encouraged, with the help of Linda, to create their self portrait. info: www.woodenshoebooks.org
6-8pm at Wooden Shoe Books

Friday July 27
Poems Not Prisons Open Mic Bad Sis Birthday Bash
with performers: Bad Sis Walidah Imarisha, Misia Denea, Lovella Calica, Alison Roh Park, Sham-e-Ali al-Jamil | info: myspace.com/poemsnotprisons
7:30pm at A-Space

Saturday July 28th
Film Screening: Giant: Awake! ¡Gigante: Despierta!
7:30pm at Wooden Shoe Books

rizumu with jason carr and stepchild
11pm till late at LAVA

Tuesday July 31st
Group Leadership and Facilitation Training with Casino-Free Philadelphia
Registration is FREE and open to all members of the public. RSVP to Nico Amador at hormiga82@riseup.net or at 805-252-2937.
6-9 pm at the Casino-Free Philadelphia offices at 230 N. Second Street.

Wednesday August 1st
Benefit party for ACT UP with DJ Alex Smith
8PM at LAVA

Friday August 3rd
Mothership Connection
a BBOY Jam & Art Show
10 pm at LAVA

First Friday Street Theater with SUSTAIN!
We'll be holding up the mock Apartheid Wall in Old City and giving out information about the real Apartheid Wall, U.S. support for the Israeli occupation, and the current situation in Palestine.
6PM 2nd and Market
info:sustainphilly@gmail.com or sustainphilly.blogspot.com

Saturday August 4th
A benefit to fix LAVA's roof with the Giants and more TBA....
http://www.myspace.com/giantsmusic
7:30pm at LAVA

August 9th
Peace vigil on Nagasaki Day
vigil at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in remembrance of the 62nd anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan.
info:chrisrecon@netzero.net

Saturday August 11th
Car Caravan to Parole the MOVE 9
12:00pm assemble at 45th & Kingsessing Ave.

Screening of Walidah Imarisha's *Finding Common Ground In New Orleans*: last Philly screening ever!!!
7pm at LAVA

Thursday August 23rd
Defenestrator 10th Anniversary Celebration featuring Stinking Lizaveta, Purple Rhinestone Eagle, Lesser Known Neutrinos & More!!!!
7pm at the Rotunda

Friday, August 24th
Can't Jail the Spirit: Art by Political Prisoner Tom Manning
With former political prisoners Laura Whitehorn and Kazi Toure and local Philly organizers to speak about "Rebuilding a Strong Movement"

info: jgp@riseup.net

August 31
Poems Not Prisons
7:30 at A-Space

September 1st
Clark Park Fundraiser
7pm at LAVA

Saturday September 15
Milcreek Farm fundraiser details TBA

November 2-4
Renewing the Anarchist Tradition (RAT) conference in Montpelier, Vermont
sponsored by the Institute for Anarchist Studies, RAT aims to provide a scholarly space in which to both reexamine and reinvigorate the social and political tradition of anarchism.

Ongoing Events and Meetings

Food Not Bombs
In a country hungry for war, that bombs countries hungry for food..
Rain or shine: Servings areSundays at 5:00PM and Mondays at 7:00PM across from the Free Library on Vine Street between 19th and 20th Streets
In West Philly : sharings happen every Wednesday @ 5pm-CEDAR PARK (50th and Baltimore)
for more info, see

ACT UP
Weekly Meeting Every Monday from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm St. Lukes Church; 330 S. 13th St. (between Pine & Spruce) Email: actupphilly@ critpath.org for more info.

Weekly Meeting of Phila. County Coalition on Prison Health Care
Every Tuesday from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Philadelphia FIGHT office, 1233 Locust St., 2nd floor, For info, contact Laura McTigh: 215-380-5556

Books Through Bars
Packing Café Every Tuesday from 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm The A Space; 4722 Baltimore Ave. E-mail: info@booksthroughbars.org for more info

Defenestrator Movie Night
Last Thursday of every month at Firehouse Bicycles
50th & Baltimore to benefit the defenestrator prisoner mailing
Call for info (215)727-9692 or info(at)firehousebicycles.com

International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia
Every Thursday from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm 4601 Market St., 5th floor Phone: 215-476-5416 for more info.

Philadelphia Anti-War Forum
Meeting Third Sunday of every month from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Aspace; 4722 Baltimore Ave and first Thurs. at Last Drop Coffee. E-mail: clanarchy@prodigy.net

INCITE! Radical Women of Color
Calling Radical Women of Color
Philly INCITE! Starting in December Philly INCITE is meeting each 1st & 3rd Thursday from 6:30-7:45pm at the A-Space

PRAWN (Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network)
Meets 1st Tues. at Local 4, AFSCME, 1606 Walnut.
6:30-9pm www.prawnworks.net

The Philadelphia Icarus Project: A Radical Mental Health Collective
meets every Sunday 6-8 pm at the A-Space Anarchist Community Space. Our monthly business meeting is held the last Sunday on each month from 6-7 pm. philadelphiaicarusproject@msn.com

LIBERATED SPACES

LAVA
The Lancaster Avenue Autonomous space is a center for radical media and organizing located at 4134 Lancaster Ave. in the Belmont Neighborhood of West Philly. info: 215.387.6155 or info@lavazone.org * lavazone.org

A-Space - a collectively run anarchist gallery and meeting/community space. Events are free and generally start at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted. Accessible by the 34 trolley. Plenty of parking for cars and bikes. They pass the hat to cover rent.
4722 Baltimore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19143
215.727.0882 a-space@defenestrator.org

WOODEN SHOE BOOKS and RECORDS - Anarchist bookstore owned and run by an unpaid collective of geniuses with nothing better to do than sit around talking philosophy and riots. Carries a wide range of anarchist and radical books, periodicals, pamphlets, T-shirts, patches, CD's records etc.
508 S. Fifth Street Philadelphia, PA
215.413.0999 woodenshoe@rocketmail.com

Firehouse Bikes- A worker owned collective bike shop.
50th and Baltimore

The Divine Bicycle Church - Bike repair co-op at Neighborhood Bike Works. Tools,advice and recycled parts available. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 6:30-9pm
40th and Locust Walk, behind St. Mary's Church

Crossroads Women's Center- open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-2pm or by appointment
33 Maplewood Mall, Germantown 215-848-1120

The Friends Center - American Friends Service Committee HQ. Contains meeting spaces and offices for a gazillion different entities.
1501 Cherry Street

the defenestrator
PO Box 30922
Philadelphia, PA 19104

to:

background art by tenbroek cripps